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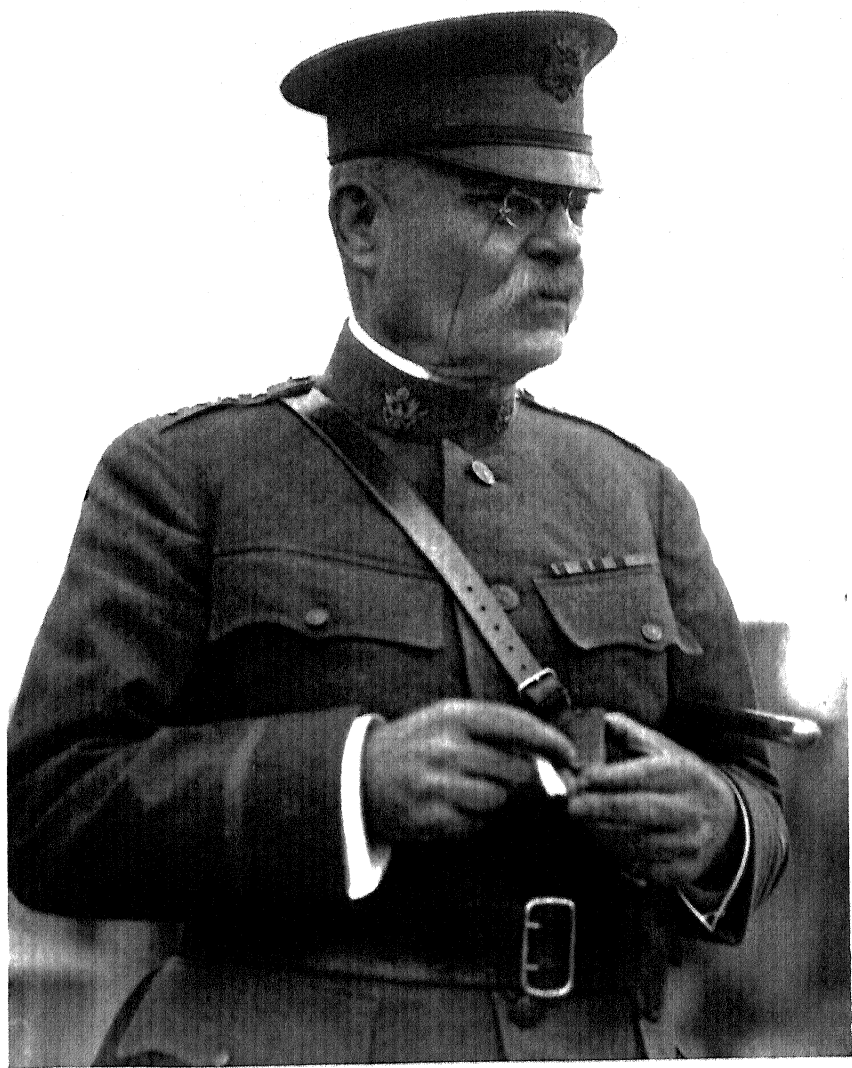
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BLISS, PEACEMAKER

Dare to be wise.

HORACE, *Epistles* I. 2. 40.

By FREDERICK PALMER
THE LAST SHOT
MY FIRST YEAR OF THE WAR
MY SECOND YEAR OF THE WAR
AMERICA IN FRANCE
CLARK OF THE OHIO
NEWTON D. BAKER: America at War
WITH MY OWN EYES (*Reminiscences*)



Tsar N. II.

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN ON THE SOMME FRONT, 1918

BLISS, PEACEMAKER

*The Life and Letters
of
General Tasker Howard Bliss*

BY
FREDERICK PALMER

ILLUSTRATED

★★★★

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N E W Y O R K 1 9 3 4

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In the name of faithful history to its sturdy disciple, Tasker Howard Bliss, for having written his letters, journals and memoranda in which he retained the perspective and detachment of an observer, even of his own part, in the midst of great events and the heat of controversy.

For assistance in further research, to the archives of the State, War and Navy Departments, the Army War College, Bucknell University, the Congressional Library, and the New York Public Library where Dr. E. H. Anderson always makes one feel perfectly at home whether one's object is vagrant or concrete.

For personal recollections and data:

To Elihu Root, who was Bliss' chief in his younger days; Newton D. Baker who was his chief in World War days; Bliss' staff and assistants on the Supreme War Council and at the Peace Conference, General B. H. Wells, Colonels S. D. Embick, U. S. Grant 3d, Arthur Poillon and W. B. Wallace, and that accomplished field clerk, H. G. Dwight.

To Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss, Miss Susan Bliss, Dr. W. C. Bartol, Judge Richard Campbell, Paul Cravath, Father J. C. Christopher, Edward M. House, Raymond Fosdick, Cameron Forbes, Ralph Hayes, Frederick Keppel, Dr. James Brown Scott, Dr. James T. Shotwell, and Charles Warren.

To General John J. Pershing, Generals W. W. Atterbury, John L. Chamberlain, W. S. Graves, W. H. Hay, James G. Harbord, Frank R. McCoy, Dennis E. Nolan, Palmer E. Pierce, Hugh L. Scott and W. S. Scott, and Colonels Archibald Rogers and David S. Stanley. And last, but not least, to Edward R. Ames for his devoted secretarial assistance.

September 20, 1934

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I

THE MOUNTAIN

IMPRESSIVE ceremonial distinction had come to Kalorama Road. Many of the residents of this quiet cross street, between main avenues of traffic in Washington where rank is the staff of official and social life, learned for the first time how important a neighbor they had when they saw the flag-draped caisson halt before the Bliss house. For the fifth time in history the army was paying one of its sons its highest final honors.

Yet the eminent statesmen, diplomats, soldiers, jurists and scholars mounting the steps and filing into the hall were not thinking of him in the terms of a four-star general who had won the laurel crown of his profession, entitling him to a blaze of first class medals on his breast. This seemed to circumscribe his orbit, the range of his mind, his career, his interests, moods and achievements; to restrict to a single gallery a man who had been at home in many galleries.

He would not again pace that hall late at night in Socratic discourse threshing out all sides of a question only to descend from high polemics to conclude that it was all too absurd and it was time to go to bed. But some of those present who thought they knew him well had never heard him in one of those characteristic soliloquies in which, if the occasion warranted, he might indulge in his office as well as at home.

Some thought he had mischosen his profession, and others said the answer to that was the use he had made of his opportunities as a soldier, and in any occupation he would have been the same Bliss. Those who thought they knew all sides of him became aware that there were sides they had missed. A great teacher of Greek said, "He kept on improving his Greek to the last—and how he liked a good detective story!" Others had never heard him quote from the Greek or Latin, but recalled how he traced the likeness to the Br'er Rabbit stories in the folklore of all primitive peoples, and he was given to quoting an old lady of his home country who said, "Some pork will bile that way."

A few saw him as a rather formidable, extremely painstaking and gruff commanding officer with his feet always on the earth; others saw him as remote from the concrete in the realm of general ideas. Admiration of him as a master of military science and history included scepticism as to whether he knew how to drill a company of infantry, although he was a graduate of West Point. Some said that in his study of all angles of a question he was slow to come to a decision, others that his decisions were so well sustained that they marched in league boots straight to the goal.

Those in awe of his knowledge might compare notes with those who regarded him as primarily human, warmly and serenely so, or had heard him in passionate outbursts in which his expletives ranged from Olympian thunders to doughboy language. The contradictions which sprang from affection or respect, from personal intimacy or close association in some period of his career, never carried a whisper that he thought too well of Bliss. The white-haired Scott, as he looked into the face of his dead friend, said aloud to himself:

"Bliss! We were classmates. We leapfrogged each other through the service. He was Chief of Staff and I was Chief of Staff. In the old days of the West when I toiled along the trail, at war with the Indians or trying to keep peace with the Indians, I always wanted a mountain in sight for my guide. Bliss was the mountain on my life's trail. Good-bye, Bliss."

A mountain may have a varied landscape with dark forests, cascades, laughing brooks, bold rocky escarpments and recesses which call for expert exploration. Those who had known the Bliss mountain when sun shone on the peak, or when it was above the clouds or when storms raged about it, agreed in saying, "He was a great man." He would have been that to them if he had never had the official rank of town clerk or a sergeant of the militia, but had been the sage who lived down the road to whom one went for advice as a counsellor of the same wisdom in small affairs that destiny set for him in the affairs of the nation in critical times.

All wondered why one who had held such high place and had had so powerful an influence on our history should be unknown to the general public. All deeply regretted that a soldier who was so capable in the use of words should not have written his reminiscences, enriched by his philosophy. To urgings his answer had been,

"There are the papers."

Upstairs in a back room, after the funeral cortege was on its way to Arlington, one could imagine a thousand voices breaking the silence, some half strangled, some no more than the faint cries of miners imprisoned by the collapse of a shaft. There were papers stored in every available niche of the little study, buried at the bottom of piles of overflowing envelopes or under bundles tied with a string. When the weight which completely silenced them was lifted from documentary diaphragms they joined the chorus of the bulging one hundred twenty loose-leaf volumes on the shelves. There was no index; the same subject was not always comprised in one part.

To be loosed in that study was to have the freedom of search on an island where the treasure had not been buried in a few places but scattered about in hundreds. There are nuggets which shine with prophecies that have been fulfilled; there are memoranda, letters and notes which would have saved the world from much agony past and to come.

As the American Chief of Staff in the early period, then as our representative on the Supreme War Council and as delegate to the Peace Conference, we have the record of the military statesman whose experience is an invaluable and unique contribution in continuity of inside personal knowledge of the American effort in the World War and its sequence. Yet this was far from the beginning and the end of the interest and value of his papers, which tell the story of his close touch with the making of history in his younger days and how in his old age the man who had once labored to civilize a savage people strove to keep civilized people from reverting to savagery.

One voice came from a small brief case which might have cost as much as a dollar. Within its single chamber was the four-star general's itinerary when he spoke for the cause of peace to the students of inland schools and small colleges on what eminent statesmen, scholars, churchmen or actors of one-star rank would have pardonably regarded as a tank-town tour beneath their importance and dignity, and quite too exhausting for a man past the army's retiring age.

Included with the itinerary and railroad folders were two small volumes of Thucydides. He had passed the time between stations, or waiting for connections at junctions, by making marginal notes of his own rendering of words and phrases. He might buy detective

stories while traveling, but newsstands and drug stores were not to be depended upon for the original texts of Latin and Greek classics.

And under that black brief case and crowded behind the loose-leaf binders were letters and talks out of his broad and deep experience which are unrivaled in their sound and practical reasoning on the subject of war and peace; a legacy in aid of all who fight on to end the curse which man has continued to raise against himself in his bursts of destructive passion. Primarily his rôle had been that of peace maker. It was as attaché in Spain before the outbreak of the Spanish War; again on the Mexican border before the World War. Possibly the best epitaph he may have is the fact that the portrait of him as the founding President of the War College, the house of war, was copied for place of honor in the home of the Council on Foreign Relations, the house of peace.

His knowledge of history was his guide in his part in making history; his vision in his time and the immutable permanence of ripe philosophy which remained young and observant are singularly applicable to our time; his long career as a public servant is a textbook for public servants in the future. Even as he has grown in the minds of his associates, while many great reputations of his era have waned, so he grew in the mind of the explorer among the papers in his study, bringing the conclusion:

"He was really a great, capacious, lovable human being who never forgot that he was just another human being himself; that while there are so many human beings of so many kinds in the world one ought never to trifle long with the personal doctrine of the infallibility of his own judgments; and that one never ought to yield his convictions where common honesty or immemorial principles are at stake."

II

A CLASSIC HOME

TO JUDGE by Bliss' letters to inquirers who would establish a family connection with a four-star general genealogy had only a casual interest for a mind which was so fond of knowledge for its own sake: he considered that the characters of his father and mother were a sufficient patent of a noble inheritance.

"Quite a number of years ago a gentleman of the name (I think) of Homer Bliss of Hartford, Connecticut published a genealogy of all persons in the United States of the name of Bliss whose ancestry he could trace. I think it is very possible that you will find that a copy of this genealogy is in any large public library in New York or Brooklyn—most likely in the Public Library of New York at the corner of Forty Second Street and Fifth Avenue. I would suggest that you consult this book. I regret that I cannot give you any further details."¹

Tasker Howard Bliss sprang from the old fecund New England stock of farmers, mechanics, merchants and rulers, with a sprinkling of clergymen, which bred the recruits for pioneering beyond the seaboard. Thomas Bliss, the paternal ancestor, came from England to Boston in 1635, then removed to Braintree, and then to Hartford. On the maternal side there was descent from William Bradford, founder and Governor of Plymouth Colony, and Thomas Dudley, Governor of Massachusetts Colony in 1634. Ruggles, Warners, Woodbridges and Ripleys appear among the family names, and William, John, Hezekiah and Elijah, and Mercy, Mary and Lucy among the given names, while the sixth in direct descent from Thomas is down in the genealogy as Gad.

The paternal grandfather, Elijah Worthington Bliss, farmer and school teacher, a devout Baptist and most convinced Jeffersonian, had migrated to northern New York State. The General's father, George Ripley Bliss, tried his fortunes at seventeen on the frontier, which was then in Indiana. There he may have heard as strong

¹ Letter to Mrs. J. Philip Munch, February 20, 1922.

language as his son, Major Bliss, used when he caught some of his subordinates grafting in the Havana Custom House. Anyhow, this bold adventure was brief, and his only one. He countermarched against the westward movement and clerked for a while in a country store before entering Madison College (later Colgate) to prepare for the Baptist ministry.

After seven years as pastor of the First Baptist Church of New Brunswick, New Jersey, he became professor of Greek at the Baptist university at Lewisburg, in Pennsylvania, now Bucknell, where he was to remain for twenty-five years until 1874, when he became professor of Biblical Exegesis at Crozer Theological Seminary. He was described as having a "singular power in prayer meetings" by a clerical colleague who considered the prayer meeting as the "spiritual thermometer."¹ He could be passionate at revival meetings and during a revival, soon after his arrival in Lewisburg, won sixty converts.²

Young men had come to Lewisburg to get an education and he was determined they should have one of the orthodox kind in this young orthodox Baptist college.

"When he was not present we called him 'Bossy' Bliss. He would lead us boys to true penitence for indiscretions and transgressions, to higher purposes, to worthier lives. A sage old saint was 'Bossy' Bliss."³

"Dr. Bliss was no reed shaken by the wind, no child tossed to and fro, carried about by every wind of doctrine. . . . He was near God. . . . There is no better example of a heart of fire, subdued and controlled by judgment."⁴

"He was the strictest close communionist I ever knew. He held the Lord's Supper to be an institution of the individual church; and, when a pastor, he did not invite to participation in it, as almost all Baptist pastors do, 'members of the same faith and order,' any more than he invited them to vote in church meeting."⁵

Yet this did not interfere with his personal friendship and esteem for that great church liberal of the time, Henry Ward Beecher, who "went to the other extreme as regards the ordinance itself, inviting to it the unbaptized and even the unconfessed Christian. And the two, thus widely sundered on the ceremonial point, were thoroughly

¹ Rev. Dr. Spratt at the Baptist Ministers' Conference, April, 1893.

² Rev. Dr. John Humpstone. Baptist Ministers' Conference, April, 1893.

³ Dr. W. C. Bartol, reminiscences in *The Bucknellian*, May 17, 1928.

⁴ President J. H. Harris, of Bucknell, at the memorial services to Dr. Bliss.

⁵ Letter by Rossiter W. Raymond after Dr. Bliss' death on March 27, 1893.

at one in the underlying spirit"—which may have been partly ascribed to the temporal influence in a violent public controversy.

Dr. Bliss had become an apostle of a young cause. He was himself an orator in the days of oratory, when Beecher was recognized as the most eloquent of preachers. Beecher's philippics against slavery glowed with divine fire to the Lewisburg professor who rejoiced in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Beecher's sister, Mrs. Stowe, as being one novel as worth reading as *Pilgrim's Progress*.

It was through his marriage with Mary Ann Raymond when he was at New Brunswick that Dr. Bliss was brought into personal touch with Beecher. Her father, Eliakim Raymond, prosperous hatter and furrier, having moved from Norwalk to Brooklyn in 1822, founded at his own expense the first Baptist Church in the then little suburb of Manhattan, which was growing fast since the advent of the steam ferries. One son, Israel Ward Raymond, was connected with the Pacific Steamship Company. Another son, John Howard Raymond, founded the Brooklyn Polytechnic and became the second President of Vassar College.

At the age of twelve, upon the death of her mother, Eliakim's daughter Susan became head of her father's house. She married John Tasker Howard, who led the movement which founded Plymouth Church and brought Beecher to Brooklyn as its pastor. It was said of him: "You might wake up Tasker Howard at midnight and he could tell you off-hand the market price of any commodity in any part of the world without stopping to think."¹

After the gold rush of '49 he profitably extended his shipping interests to California. Word came to Lewisburg that the enterprising Uncle John had become the friend and partner of the famous pathfinder, John C. Frémont. Uncle John gave his time and energy to the nomination of Frémont as the first Presidential candidate of the new Republican Party.

Its champions, in conquering zeal, were gathering in Aunt Susan's salon on Brooklyn Heights, in which Beecher continued to be the spirited central figure until his death. Still adhering fast to the religious creed of his fathers, Dr. Bliss, after due deliberation, forsook his ancestral inheritance and became a Republican.

The Howards had money; they were the rich and important rela-

¹ *Remembrance of Things Past*, John Raymond Howard, 1925.

tives in touch with the great world. They made the "grand tour" of Europe; they spent months in Rome, where they met Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Susan exchanged letters with Mrs. Browning. In the phrase of the day, she had "epistolary charm."

To the Bliss, Raymond and Howard families she was a glamorous hostess who appeared to be all but immortal with the passage of time. She remembered the illumination of New York in 1815 in celebration of the peace in conclusion of the second war with Great Britain; she saw Lafayette lay the corner stone of the Apprentices' Library which afterward became the Brooklyn Institute. When she was not entertaining she was "always to be found with a book and a baby."¹ She bore nine children, all of whom "did well." One son she named after Beecher; another, Joseph Howard, became as famous a journalist as any columnist or Washington correspondent of a later time.

When her sister, Mary Raymond Bliss, sought a name for the seventh of her thirteen, a boy, she had only to turn to her sisters and brothers and aunts and uncles, with a broad choice exclusive of Biblical first names of grandfathers and great uncles, which were going out of fashion. There must be a Susan for Aunt Susie and a Tasker Howard for Uncle Tad. Tasker Bliss, born on the last day of December, 1853, was to hear a great deal about Uncle Tasker, but more about blithe Aunt Susan who never overlooked Christmas and birthdays with welcome gifts. She arrived like a burst of light, and the glow of it remained long after she had gone.

Tasker's early memories were of the repercussions in his home of the rising sectional and party emotions which were leading to fratricide. He saw his father leave his study with apostolic fire in his eyes to make speeches for Lincoln, the triumph in his eyes when Lincoln was elected; he heard his father's prayers for divine guidance for Lincoln in his hours of trial after he took office, and saw his father's face go stern when Sumter was fired on. It was God's will to the grave man whose elder pupils were going to the drill-ground; the cause must be won in the ordeal of fire; we had been patient; God was on our side.

The father was too old to enlist, Tasker a boy of eight. Tasker saw the troops marching forth; the knots of people gathering at the telegraph office for news when a great battle was being fought—

¹ *Brooklyn Eagle*, June 14, 1906.

news of battles lost, of battles that were a draw, with fewer and fewer students on the campus as the war grew old. He knew the alarm of a little community when word came that the enemy legions were marching toward Harrisburg, that they might soon be in Lewisburg.

He saw his father depart for the field of Gettysburg in the Biblical rôle of the Good Samaritan. There Dr. Bliss met southern chaplains who also thought that God was on their side, but they had no time to discuss differences of opinion as they labored side by side. And the father returned footsore and exhausted to tell for the first time the story he was so often to tell of how he had kept on searching until he found food and drink for a badly wounded Alabama soldier, who had been misled by the rebel leaders to fight for the wrong, but was a fine boy.¹

Five years passed. Andrew Johnson's torment in the Presidency drew to a close. Tad had been graduated from the Lewisburg Academy, the "prep" school for the University, and in the fall would go "up the hill" into that higher world of the University itself, which was ruled by a faculty of five who taught the Greek and Latin languages and literature, mathematics and natural philosophy, and the natural sciences. The system in applying a curriculum which was in no wise elective, as described by Dr. Bartol, who was a classmate of Tasker:

"The college bell called us to chapel at 7.15 A. M. Chapel lasted just fifteen minutes. The roll-call of all the students was called, a short scripture lesson was read, a short prayer was offered, a hymn was sung, and then each professor and student rushed to his classroom, and promptly at 7.30 the morning recitation began.

"Then each professor, each student, was free to do as he pleased until 9 A. M. At that hour, Joe Bogert, the bell ringer, stood at his big chapel bell. He listened, and with the first nine o'clock tap of the town clock he began to pull his bell rope. That was the signal for study hour. It ordered every student to his room and to spend the next two hours upon the next lesson. Then, again at the first stroke of eleven o'clock, Bogert began to pull his bell rope. Then every professor and student rushed to his classroom. Again at twelve o'clock all recitation rooms were emptied.

"At two o'clock, the bell rang out; 'Study hour till four o'clock—everybody in his room!' The campus grounds cleared rapidly. Recitations followed from four to five o'clock. Bogert rang his bell again at seven for a study period ending at nine.

¹ Rev. Dr. John Humpstone, Baptist Ministers' Conference, April 24, 1893.

"The rule that we be in our rooms for study during study hour was strictly enforced. President Loomis once thought he had caught a classmate of Tasker's breaking this rule, and so it was. One morning in chapel service we were kept over time. The President had an important message for us. We listened attentively. He was telling us in his sledge hammer way about the wickedness of breaking the rule for study hour, and how he hoped he would never be called upon to punish severely anyone for such a grave offense.

"'And yet,' he went on, 'it now becomes my painful duty, as President of the University, to place upon Freshman Frank M. Higgins the full censure of the college for this offense. It is reported to me by an undoubted witness that he engaged in playing croquet during study hour.' The faculty sat there with stern faces endorsing every sledge hammer stroke which the President made on the shrinking culprit."¹

Yet Higgins had passed the highest entrance examination next to Tasker, and was studying for the ministry. Dr. Bartol relates how this fractious freshman once remarked to a "dressy" classmate: "Do you think that the Apostle Paul would ever have worn a suit like yours?" President Loomis did not limit disciplinary action to public censure. Once he caned a student whom he caught intoxicated at night on the campus.²

Dr. Bliss had seen a sectional rebellion suppressed only to face an intellectual one which was international. The orthodox were scandalized by Darwin's *Origin of Species*, with its popularly construed hypothesis that man was not divinely created, but descended from a monkey.

Fewer young men were studying advanced Greek, many convinced that the dead languages were less useful than chemistry, physics and engineering as a preparation for their future in a living world in which a transcontinental railroad was being built, electricity harnessed, suspension bridges swung across rivers, and science turning its light on religious faith and forming a new mundane philosophy.

Dr. Bliss would always listen to the sceptics and inquirers among his students. Once, when he noted that one was foundering, owing to his superficial knowledge, he said:

"If you are interested in such questions, there is a recent book

¹ Letter to the author, May 31, 1934, from Dr. W. C. Bartol, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Astronomy at Bucknell University.

² Ibid.

which has attracted a good deal of attention, and which it is worth your while to read—Mr. Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*." Spencer, if not Darwin, was permissible, and Dr. Bliss read Darwin, too, in order to keep posted on the new movement. In reply to views that were heterodox to him he was described in an anonymous character sketch in a church paper as saying, politely if not convincingly: "It is likely that what you set forth will be the general opinion of educated Christians some time, but I am too old to accept it."

Out of his annual salary of five hundred dollars he always gave fifteen, twenty or twenty-five to the church.¹ The recently built Baptist church being crippled for funds, he served as its pastor without pay, in addition to his professorial duties. The family had little outside income. Meanwhile the stork continued his visits to the Bliss household. In those days keeping faith with the Biblical injunction to increase and multiply had an economic warrant in the opportunity of undeveloped national resources, but this left mother with an acute and growing economic problem. "She felt the pressure that hampered men of his class in those days."² Small, ceaselessly active, ever present minded, she was the general, the executive director of the offices and works in contrast to her deliberate, slow-spoken husband, shut up with his books, keeping up his correspondence with fellow theologians and studying modern languages and other ancient languages as well as Greek and Hebrew.

Her hoopskirts must be of a moderate size if there were to be room for them among all her offspring in that small house; and she were to go up and down the stairs on the run, make sure the meals were on time, the little ones ready for school, all on hand for morning prayers, none made the most of the excuse for escape from the one bathroom, and all marshaled in their best for their march with father in his old broadcloth and mother in her old alpaca to church on Sabbath morning and to the evening services, too. The best for the younger children was made over from the clothes the next eldest had outgrown. Enforced application of the privilege of primogeniture allowed only the very eldest to enjoy new clothes.

The mother was the active disciplinarian acting under the general orders of the father in council, her rôle that of a busy coach with

¹ Rev. Dr. Spratt at the Baptist Ministers' Conference of April 24, 1893.

² *Remembrance of Things Past*, John Raymond Howard, 1925, p. 43.

her, "Harriet, you are big enough to know better." "Ward, what will the other professors say if Dr. Bliss' son slips in his lessons?" "Susan, if nobody did anything but what they wanted to do, the world would fall to pieces and you would go hungry," and "Robert, that sounds to me like whining." In those days "Spare the rod and spoil the child" had not entirely passed out of vogue. On rare occasions, after all the evidence had been taken and reviewed, maternal judgment decreed a trip upstairs to a secret executive session in which the victim underwent, in the days when legs were called limbs, corrective paddywhacks on bare surfaces.

In the custom of the large families of the time, Mary, the eldest daughter, became the second mother, who had periods of rest when she visited Aunt Susan in Brooklyn. It was Mary who appeared in tears one day to say that she had heard one of the boys use a word too terrible for her to repeat. Father looked up from his study of the ancients to concentrate on economic discipline. Meanwhile, mother encouraged Mary to write the word. When she saw it was "Thunder," she stifled her mirth and hastened to the study to stay the hand of unmerited punishment.¹

When each cent spent must get a full cent's worth of a necessity of life, a croquet set was a luxurious concession to the ruling pastime on the Bliss lawn. We may imagine father joining in the game, taking deliberate aim and enjoying quiet triumph over a good shot, while mother, with her quick stroke, got as much thrill out of missing a wicket as making it.

There was no tennis yet, but Badminton, from which modern tennis sprung, was much played in England and somewhat in America. There was no gymnasium, no basket ball at this freshwater college, and the game of rounders had only recently expanded into the complex game of baseball.

Reports reached Lewisburg that some men were actually playing baseball for pay just as prizefighters fought for purses and horses ran for stakes. But sports were for the sporting; the purpose of a college was no more to produce gladiators for the arena than song and dance artists for the stage. It was as incredible that a college graduate should ever become a paid athletic coach as that the grad-

¹ Mrs. Adolph Knopf (née Eleanor Bliss) to the author.

uate of a first class medical college should dress up as an Indian and sell corn-killer on the street corners. We were only on the edge of the movement to tan the pale cast of thought and relate leanness to physical fitness rather than to the scanty rations of the student grind who accepted his dyspepsia as the penalty, not to say the distinction, associated with scholarship. The time was not yet when Dr. Dudley Allen Sargent, the pioneer instructor of a new gospel as revolutionary as Darwinian evolution, would be admitted to equality of fellowship with the Harvard faculty.

However, the students of conservative Bucknell did play baseball and, eighteen years after the first Harvard-Yale boat race, they made up two boating crews. President Loomis, to show that he was not unresponsive to the talk about the importance of exercise, set the students to the task of filling in and grading the campus. They could blister their hands at something constructive just as well as at mere games. Tasker had his share of this. Much of his spare time was spent in earning spending money.

He must have been well liked. Both of the two Greek letter fraternities then in the college "did their best to win him into membership—something that seldom happens to a freshman. He chose to join the Phi Kappa Psi. . . . Tasker often came into my room to chat a while. 'Big Bill' Schooley, another fraternity brother, about fifty pounds bigger and two years older than Tasker, too, was a frequent visitor to my room. It chanced that Bill and Tasker got together in a friendly wrestling scrap. Bill had much the better of it, and advised Tasker to shout enough. 'Hold on, Bill,' said Tasker (who was six feet in height), 'and just recall how it came out with David and Goliath.' Tasker never gave up. He may have been down at times, but he never admitted that he was out." ¹

His favorite exercise from boyhood had been walking, which cost only shoe leather. "From the time we could walk a quarter of a mile our greatest pleasure was to go with father for a walk, especially when we were little things and he took us in the evenings down the river." ²

In the days before we talked of metabolism in the terms of vitamins

¹ Dr. W. C. Bartol to the author.

² Miss Harriet Bliss, the General's sister, in a letter to Mrs. Adolph Knopf.

or even calories, the maternal general of the Bliss household must have managed on her meager budget to provide enough of these, or any other elements in proper nutrition not yet discovered. She lost only one of her offspring, and him by accident—a remarkable record before the era of preventive medicine and surgery—and the others became healthy men and women who did as well in after life as Aunt Susan's brood. In spite of having borne thirteen she lived to be ninety-one, which might be said to be relatively as good a record as the ninety-four of Aunt Susan who had borne nine.

The mother's most frequent admonition to Tasker was, "Hold your head up, Tad!" She did not want a son who drooped his head between round shoulders.¹ Tasker was the tallest of her boys, over six feet at seventeen as a sophomore at Bucknell, with so huge a torso that in the nineties of beef in football the incline of his enormous shoulders would have been a welcome sight on the scrub as having already qualified with the football slouch.

He always looked forward to the summer visits of Uncle John Howard Raymond, champion of the higher education of women at his young Vassar. Lewisburg had its own female seminary; but the girls were forbidden to walk across the campus of the men's university. The headlines of the co-educational Bucknell of a later day, with the college paper carrying such headlines "B. U. Co-ed Debaters Win One, Lose Two," "Bell Hop Publishers Hot Exchange No." and "Co-eds Start Spring Physical Education" would not have been in atmospheric harmony with the views of the Bucknell faculty in the late sixties and the early seventies.

Uncle John's bold plan, as he stated it, was to "make an honest effort at organizing a liberal education for women and taking students at the point where thorough education leaves off at existing ladies' seminaries, and carrying them through a well digested, well balanced course of higher culture adapted to the sex."² On the thesis of his then advanced views, "God created woman to be a companion of man, because it was not good for man to be alone. Herein the creator determined her general relations to man to be that of an auxiliary. But He said nothing of limits within which this assistance was to be confined, and beyond which it was not good for

¹ Miss Susan Bliss, the General's sister, to the author.

² Letter from Dr. Raymond to Dr. Bliss, July 10, 1864.

man to be alone. . . . Wherever it is right for man to go it is right for woman to accompany him.”¹ . . . Millions had been spent on colleges for young men at home and abroad “while not a single endowed college for women existed in all Christendom.”² When Dr. Raymond said he had some girl students at Vassar who would hold their own with the boy scholars at Bucknell, this was carrying his enthusiasm as a pioneer too far.

Uncle John was boyish, companionable, fresh from a living world to the young Tasker in his isolation. His interests were as manifold in his days as Tasker’s were to be. He had long been known for a lively way of expressing himself for his time: “By the way, Arnold was a delightful fellow, was not he? Rather fast to be safe, perhaps. Race-y as well as racy, eh? What an idea of the church! ‘A brave man struggling in the toils of’—superstition. Longing for liberty, but missing the way out.”³

Again: “We watch with unabated interest the progress of public events, and trust that the Lord means good for our poor nation, whose prosperity threatens to destroy her. Poor old Scott! I should have pitied him if he had not made such a donkey of himself that poetic justice, to say nothing of political, required such a ‘walloping’ as he’s got.”⁴ And of Whiggery ditto. Gone to the shades, long may she stay there.”⁵

Tasker had this fellowship in general ideas in the prime of Uncle John’s years, learning and philosophy. Uncle John quoted as freely from Shakespeare as father quoted from the Bible and Greek. He was a lover of nature. When he set forth on a day’s tramp with Tasker he repeated passages from Shakespeare and gave every tree, stone, and flower a message.⁶ Uncle John was great, father was great; but Uncle John’s greatness was different from father’s.

If Tasker were on the way to be a scholar, he was saved from being a prig by his companionship with Uncle John, his fellow students, and by his abundant physical activity and his mental curiosity. He had more hours a day to spend than other boys. He could sit up until three in the morning talking and be fresh for

¹ Baccalaureate sermon to the Vassar Class of 1871 by Dr. Raymond.

² From a biographical sketch of Matthew Vassar by Dr. Raymond, 1868.

³ Letter from Dr. Raymond to Dr. Bliss, March 2, 1846.

⁴ This refers to General Winfield Scott’s candidacy for the Presidency.

⁵ Letter from Dr. Raymond to Dr. Bliss, November 21, 1851.

⁶ Miss Harriet Bliss to the author.

class at 7.30. If he were out of touch with that day's lesson in class, because he had been reading or thinking about other subjects, he would concentrate successfully on the next day's text.

There was a lot to learn, and he would get at the truth of it as well as he could from the information accessible in Lewisburg. He took Darwin and Huxley in his stride, not by hearsay, but by reading them for himself. With youth's enthusiasm in discovery he launched new ideas which carried a suggestion of agnosticism in the home circle, where agnostics were classed with atheists on the other side of a sharp dividing line.

As the father carved at dinner he answered a question from Tasker only to have it followed by another and another, each becoming more penetrating, until the paternal brow contracted and the white paternal beard stiffened in concluding the discussion and returning to the didactic method.

There was time yet; Tad was young; he could not learn all in a day; he would yet see the value of the wisdom of experience as guide. Meanwhile, the other children must have some attention. The father would know how they were getting on with their lessons. Quotations from Greek and Latin took the place of slang around that table where the teacher had more pupils than in his classes in advanced Greek.

He taught good usage of English, with admonitions not to burst out with an idea until it was clearly framed in mind, and to use the correct word to express your meaning. Even if it kept Dr. Bliss from his studies, no pains was spared to do exact justice, as he understood it, in the smallest affair. The most moderate shading of the truth was abhorrent to him. Squirrel answers were never acceptable. They received more censure than frank confessions in the forum of benevolent despotism.

At times Tasker must have been conscious of a certain repression in that patriarchy where demonstrativeness was never in order. Still, we do have a record that Dr. Bliss could make his little joke in mild departure from the serene formality that governed his life.

"Once in later years he visited my home for some clerical convention. Coming home that same afternoon from New York, I found him placidly enjoying the coolness of the front piazza, and asked him about the day's

doings, adding, 'I suppose the chief address of the day was interesting.' 'Yes, yes,' he gently replied. 'I should say, however, that it did not seem to exhibit any unusual ability. Indeed, one might omit the word unusual'—and he gave me a quiet humorous smile."¹

¹ *Remembrance of Things Past*, John Raymond Howard, 1925, p. 43.

III

SCHOLAR AND SOLDIER

TASKER saw how his father had to conclude sadly that he could give only ten dollars to the church this year; how closely his mother had to reckon to meet the increasing demand for food, clothes and shoes while the cost of education mounted; and how the absence of the largest of the birds from the crowded nest would make room for the younger ones.

He had never been farther away from Lewisburg than he could walk.¹ Train fares were so far beyond the limitations of the family budget that Philadelphia was as out of his reach as New York or Boston. He had learned that there were two institutions which from the day you entered paid all the expenses of instruction and maintenance. He had traveled in imagination with Uncle Tasker's ships across the seas to foreign lands; he had seen the pictures of Farragut at Mobile Bay. His first choice was the Naval Academy, but no appointment was available.²

The alternative was West Point. The stress then laid upon thorough mastery of rigidly prescribed fundamentals gave both West Point and Annapolis high prestige for their general as well as professional education. The high commanders in the Civil War had been graduates of West Point; theirs were the glorious names of its annals on both sides: Grant, who was now President, Sherman and Sheridan, and Lee and Jackson.

On many nights Tasker had gone to the room of John C. Cooke, a student who had entered college after serving through the Civil War. Enlisting when he was seventeen in 1861, Cooke had been in the great battles of the Army of the Potomac from first to last. He had been wounded in the Bloody Angle at Gettysburg, again at Spottsylvania, again at Cold Harbor and for the fourth time at Sailor's Creek, three days before Lee's surrender.

Raptly listening far into the morning, Tasker could not have

¹ Bliss to the author.

² Bliss to the author.

enough of the details of Cooke's experience, which summoned up actions and scenes that Tasker seemed to live in reality for himself. He pressed Cooke with questions about the war which no soldier, no general, not even Abraham Lincoln himself, could answer. After a long session in which Cooke had called to mind many incidents he had all but forgotten, Tasker asked: ¹

"Jack, what kind of a soldier do you think I would make?"

"Tad, you'd make a good professor at West Point."

Tasker did not want to be a professor. He could not quite see how depth and breadth of knowledge might not be most useful to an officer of the army.

We may look behind the scenes on that family when Tasker talked about going to West Point. The father would be sure that Tad had definitely made up his mind that he wanted to be a soldier. If so, well and good. There should be no difficulty in his passing the entrance examinations. They required no Greek, but it was to be hoped that Tad would not give up his Greek. He had more Latin than he needed, and was well advanced beyond the requirements in mathematics.

The other children pictured him in that impressive cadet uniform with the bright round buttons, the claw hammer coat tails, and the hat with a plume; they saw him making a journey up the Hudson almost as far as Poughkeepsie where Uncle John lived. But he would not be allowed to visit Uncle John and see him with all his college girls, never allowed out of uniform or away from the Point until his furlough at the end of the second year.

The shade of the sternest pedagogue in American history, Sylvanus Thayer, father preceptor of West Point, would not have been displeased at the widespread idea that the cadets were virtually prisoners, saluting and standing rigid when they recited in class, and often fainting in their tracks in the course of merciless drill. It was not so terrible as that, but the reports limited the number of applicants to those who were really in earnest, automatically warning off mother's pampered darlings, among whom certainly Mary Ann Raymond's upbringing had not classed Tad. Now he would be taught to hold his head up.

After his home training and the Spartan régime of Lewisburg

¹ John C. Cooke to the author.

University, West Point's Spartan régime could be no shock to him. With the equal rights of so many brothers and sisters to consider, he had learned thoughtfulness for others and gratitude for kindness accompanied by frequent reminders to mind your manners.

He walked sixteen miles barefoot, with his new shoes tied around his neck to keep their blacking fresh for the occasion, in order to thank the Representative in Congress who gave him his appointment.¹

And one day he stood in line with other aspirants from all parts of the land, boys of proud southern families, and proud northern families, and old army families, and the sons of the poor of all classes, who were to surrender their free will to the moulding process which would make them officers of the army ever under orders and fast bound in the equality of pride of corps no matter what their origin. Many had crammed hard to pass the elementary examination of that day. No one had had so much preliminary school instruction as Tasker, but he would not be hazed for that if he were not fresh about it. His real distinction was his size, the big Bliss.

And it pleased his father that he had in his valise on his odyssey from home the text of another *Odyssey* by his father's favorite poet, Homer, which possibly had never been before in the baggage of a West Point cadet-to-be.

"Look how he holds his head up!" said his mother when he returned on his furlough, shoulders squared, after two years' instruction in that institution which from its inception had made its physical training no more elective than its mental.

The younger sisters wanted him to wear his uniform about Lewisburg.² Wouldn't he walk just once across the campus in it with them? He would not consent even to that limited display, although he did yield for an elder sister's wedding, and thus gave the occasion a resplendent martial touch for the younger sisters.

He might be alive to the military importance of having all his shiny buttons buttoned, but he took little interest in them as a personal adornment. Distaste for "side" was ever inherent in him. So it had not to be deflated or his rough edges as a pleb sandpapered and later polished by the class next above his own in an institu-

¹ Bliss to the author.

² Miss Susan Bliss to the author.

tion in which the much advocated self-expression of a later day had no preceptorial encouragement. It taught automatic obedience by a cadet to his superiors in order that as an officer he might know how to exact and appreciate obedience.

But classroom records and the close relations of an isolated world reveal natural bent and character, and these become a guiding heritage which are ever remembered in future by fellow graduates who spend their lives together. Thus a general on one side in the War Between the States knew the character of the general opposite him from having served with him, and so formed a judgment of his probable action.

Bliss had high standing in all branches, but excelled in languages, mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, tactics, engineering, law minerals and geology: his best records being in French and ordnance and gunnery, and his lowest in drawing and discipline in which he was about twentieth on the list. History, which so deeply interested him, was not classed as a separate branch at the time. Among his demerits, which were not numerous, was carelessness when his mind was evidently busy with some subject which led him to overlook some military detail.

One report against him would have astonished his father. It was for "using profane exclamations 4:45 and 5 P. M. July 20, 1872," but whether they were classic or modern is not recorded. Evidently he was not of the type chosen for cadet officers, since in spite of his standing in his studies he was never made a cadet corporal or sergeant, although in his final year he became a cadet lieutenant.¹

His fellow cadets recognized his reserve mental and physical powers which he had never to exert to the full to keep pace. He had a prodigious capacity for mastering a lesson quickly; he was a storehouse of knowledge which those who would might tap.

When the fundamentals of military science, as taught in the classroom, did not go deep enough for him, he read further in leisure hours on the subject, or possibly studied some subject extraneous to the curriculum, just as at Lewisburg.²

But for his outside reading his classmates said that he would have been at the head of his class. This goal did not touch his ambition;

¹ Records of the United States Military Academy.

² Colonel Archibald Rogers, a classmate, to the author.

indeed, no one thought of him as ambitious, but rather as taking things as they came, and getting a great deal out of life in his own way. To have been number one would have been a little too conspicuous for him. But word that he had been graduated near the foot of his class would have been a family tragedy in which the father saw son Tasker as a failure.

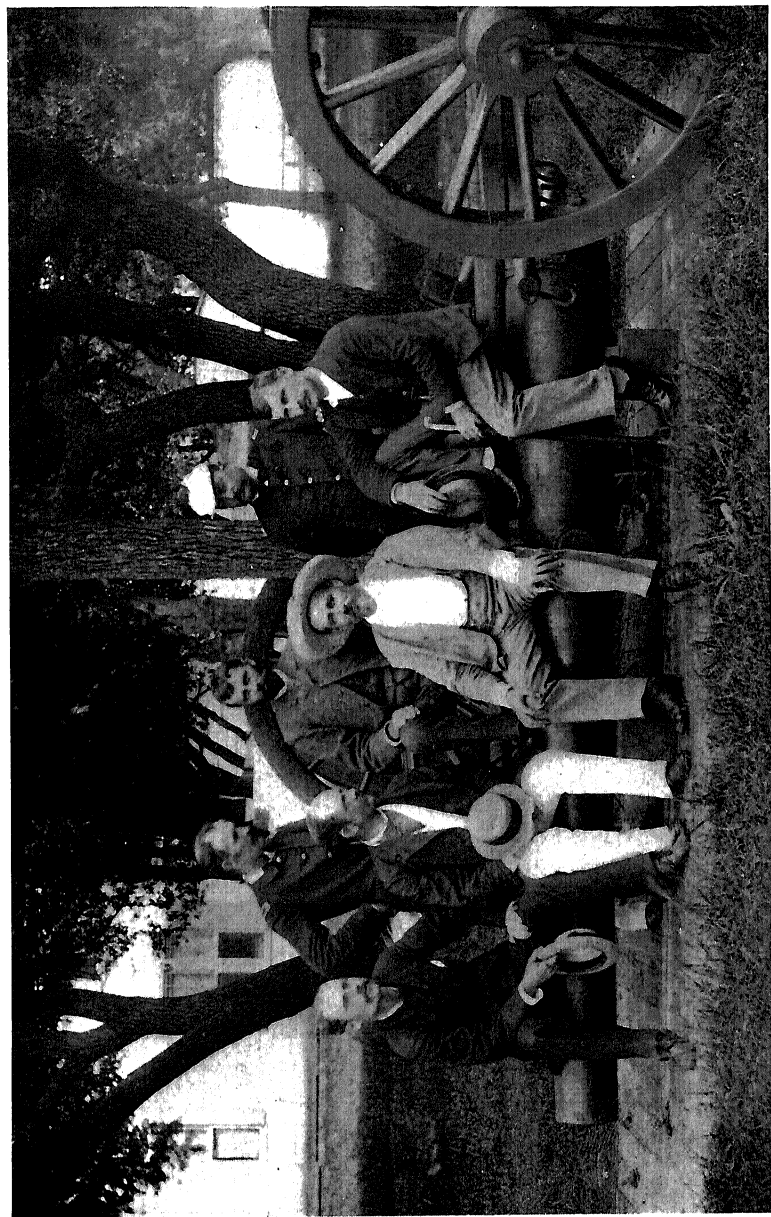
Tasker stood eighth, yet his classmates ranked him as the scholar, the brain of the class of 1875, in their recognition that he knew a lot more than recitations required. He was regarded as being by nature more of a scholar than a soldier. This reputation followed him in the army through his career as the simplest way of classifying a man who did not seem to fall into any definite classification but to be a law unto himself.

In linear promotion number seven would always be on file above Second Lieutenant Bliss, who was assigned to the old First Artillery stationed at Fort Monroe, and he would always be one file above number nine. Number seven might become a brigadier general before retirement when there was no vacant brigadiership for number eight.

The members of the class of '75 realized the then poor prospects of the calling of arms in the United States. They knew that if a single one of them ever rose to a brigadiership he would be lucky: for they had the inside view of the popular reference to cadets as future generals, which sprang from the Civil War days when graduates of the fifties, even of the late fifties, won their stars in action.

Then youngsters had commanded thousands of men. Now those on the Confederate side were commanding a mule ploughing cotton and cornfields in the struggle for a livelihood. Those who had been in the Federal army and remained in the regular service were reduced to majors and captains and even lieutenants in small garrisons scattered through the West, as a protection against outbreaks of Indians restless in face of the extensive railroad building and the rapid influx of settlers—not to mention the rapacity of Indian agents which made it even harder for a proud savage to be what the Great Father classed as a good Indian.

There was not a wisp on the horizon of our foreign relations which might develop into a future war cloud. The thought of the country was entirely concentrated on peaceful development, the



Bliss

A GROUP OF OFFICERS AT FORT MONROE, 1885

Congressional tendency toward further whittling of the tiny force of regulars. If war should come we reasoned that we had in the Civil War veterans, who were mostly still young, a trained force which had only to be issued the Civil War arms we had in storage to form a large effective army. For high command we had General Grant in the White House, and he could summon Sherman, Sheridan, Hancock and Schofield as leaders in the field.

The military science learned at the Academy had no application on the frontier where the boredom of life in the isolated posts was much the same as in the days which drove Captain Ulysses S. Grant to misery and resignation. Alarms that the braves were preparing to go on the warpath were the only excitement breaking the monotonous routine. There was nothing to look forward to except the arrival of the next mail; no relaxation except poker playing, drinking and gossip, if there were no buffalo, elk or deer in the neighborhood for hunting.

Only a succession of Indian wars, or an epidemic, which removed superiors, could hasten the torpid processes of promotion which whitened the hairs of first lieutenants and made captains venerable. In face of this one may wonder why a man of Bliss' mental capacity, who would have become a distinguished counsellor at the law or a great consulting engineer, did not resign and turn to civil life which then offered such rich opportunities to educated young men who were numbered only by dozens relative to the thousands of a future era. But it never occurred to Bliss that he had exceptional capacity. This was not an idea that his father encouraged among his children. It might incline them to ignorance's excuse that they already knew a great deal. And duty came before knowledge in Bliss' lexicon.

He did not forget that he had a free education from his government to prepare him to be one of its servants. He had a debt to pay, an obligation to fulfill until such time as the government indicated that it had no further need of him.¹ He liked the service, its fellowship. He need not worry about money or struggle for money, which had ever been the haunting problem at home. His pay, the same as other second lieutenants', was secure, enough for one brought up to simple living. He had more time at old Fort Monroe than as a

¹ Bliss to the author.

cadet for outside study; and he was to have time for it in his four years' assignment, 1876-80, as an assistant professor of French and artillery tactics at West Point. While he improved his Spanish and German as well as his French, he began studying Russian. By this time his parents had removed to Chester, Pennsylvania, where his father had become professor at Crozer Theological Seminary. The singularly strong Bliss family tie was not the only attraction that called him back to Pennsylvania for his holidays. He was in love.

IV

MARRIAGE AND EARLY CAREER

Now it is the Hill family's turn for attention in its influence on Bliss' career. If the voices in his study after his death had been hushed by an usher's warning *Place aux Dames*, a voice from an old pastel would have floated airily down the stairs. A stroller, who took only a passing interest in old portraits, might have paused and exclaimed at the sight of this pastel in the window of an antique shop, "What a charming person!"

A collector who bought the pastel might have sought later in the pride of his possession to learn the name of the lady and where she held court. For certainly she must have held court. This was clearly an inherent gift as well as a right.

She was Anne Maria, the daughter of Sir Harry Goring, 6th Baronet; but her life had not been bound by provincial English squiredom of the late eighteenth century. She was at home on the banks of the Seine as well as the banks of the Thames, and she had seen naked swords flash in the hands of spur-jinglers and revolution wrought in blood by the gamble of arms. It is quite unlikely that she was as beautiful as the artist portrayed her in her youth. It was not in the custom of the portraiture of the day that she should be. Time and the turmoil she had seen, it is said, left her very correct and a little austere in her old age, this great grandmother of the girl with whom second lieutenant Bliss fell in love.

Her daughter, Lucy Frances Lewis, married Thomas Finimore Hill. An old photograph of him, in the days before retouching and photographer's tricks simulated the painter's free hand in making an ancestor appear seemly, show him with the distinct masculine lines of a broad mouth, commanding nose and chin and the intelligent eyes of a man of the world, of parts, of responsibilities. A large property owner in Exeter, England, he had also extensive interests abroad, which took him frequently to Paris.

He judged and guarded his investments when financiers were listening for the latest word about the policy of the rising house of

Rothschild, trying to foresee what Napoleon's next move would be and what effect it would have on the price of consols and wondering whether or not Britain could retain command of the sea. If she lost it her disaster would be as complete as the Emperor's triumph.

Thomas Hill knew the French almost as well as he knew his own people, for he had to deal with both peoples in their bitter enmity. His sister married a Colonel Prétot of Napoleon's army. He knew Spain, too. Once on a mission there he had to fly before the invading French army. Spanish securities, which had been gilt-edged, were among the economic casualties of the Napoleonic marches and changes. As executor Hill had invested in them for the daughter of a friend. When he made up the loss out of his own pocket his fortune was exhausted.

He would renew it in the new land and, it is said, opportunity was located for him there through meeting abroad a Mr. Barlow, an American. Mr. Barlow had married a Miss Preble, who had been educated in a young ladies' school in Paris, and taken her to the remote hills of western Pennsylvania. Miss Preble had been a friend of Mrs. Hill, who had succumbed to pneumonia, contracted from sitting over-heated after dancing at a Paris ball. Mrs. Hill's death, while still young, left the care of the Hills' five children to the grandmother, the lady of the pastel.

One daughter was named Anne Maria for the grandmother. Before Matthew Vassar had supplied the funds for Uncle John to start that pioneer college of Christendom for the higher education of women, Maria had had tutors to make her proficient in all branches from dancing, embroidering and music to languages and the sciences. She spoke French just as fluently as English, which she brought with an English accent to a region which was still on the edge of the frontier. She had been transplanted to a world where culture centered around the local clergyman and schoolmaster and finance around the local merchant and banker; and in that world her name became shortened to 'Ria, with the i hard, although not by the Barlows.

The girl who had been used to the ritual of the Church of England, who had seen the Archbishop of Paris conduct the impressive and sumptuous high mass at Notre Dame, and had friends who found security without question in the mother church, now heard ser-

mons from bare pulpit facing bare walls and no music except the singing of hymns. She was evidently different from the other Hill girls, less bound by convention, more intellectually inquiring, and adapting herself more readily to the new life. She met a studious and devout young Baptist preacher, Reverend George W. Anderson, the clerical "catch" of the region. They fell in love and were married.

Her father, who wore the thin gold band wedding ring in memory of his own romance with the wife who died in her youth, was not unsympathetic with his daughter's romance. He had moderately prospered in the new land. His family and his friends always called him Monsieur, but to the end he remained the traveled Englishman, who was at heart a little more English for being a man of the world. His home was in America where his children were rooted in the soil, but he often visited England taking them with him. After his death Anne Maria usually spent a few weeks every year with her relatives in Sussex.

The Bliss and Anderson families were first brought into association when Dr. Anderson became professor of Latin at Lewisburg in 1849, the members of the faculty at Lewisburg being almost invariably clergymen, as they were in denominational colleges of the time. Anne Maria never ceased to think that her husband was the greatest of men, but even in that rarefied classic atmosphere of faculty circles at Lewisburg, where her name was not shortened to 'Ria, she must have called up pictures of her girlhood in Paris and London, of fashion's show in Hyde Park and on the Champs Elysées.

Dr. Anderson left Lewisburg long before Dr. Bliss, but the families kept up their friendship. Maria Anderson brought an influence in Tasker's life different from that of his home, different from that of Uncle John of Vassar, and of Uncle Tasker, the friend of Frémont and merchant and shipping master who had been in California. From her lips he heard the French accent and idioms to the manner born. She knew German, too. She opened the album of her memory about other peoples, their action and thought in stirring days—this mother of the girl he was to marry, this daughter of the quiet reserved Monsieur who had been close to history when Pitt and Napoleon were making it. For this receptive pupil, who was one day to see her old world in another epoch of alarm and violence, she

tapped a cosmopolitan wisdom which was as alien to her surroundings as the realities of life in America to the faculty of the Lycée of a small French city or of an English select school for young ladies. He always addressed her as Madame.

She was most interested when General John M. Schofield, superintendent of West Point, asked him to expand his lecture on the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 into a monograph for publication. It was then he first took up the study of Russian. He delved into the history of the Balkan peoples, which was as exciting as a detective story, thus adding another chapter to his knowledge which was to be useful to him on the Supreme War Council. Thoroughness in his task, in addition to his duties as instructor, required he should translate many German documents. She bade him pass on some of them to her, and we read his notes of gratitude to her and also his plea that if she had not time to spare for the latest he had sent to her, to send it back and he would do it himself.¹

By this time she knew that her translations were only auxiliary to a livelier interest in the Anderson household on his part than a history of any war.

Daughter Ellen did not have to go to college to learn French and German. She had that from the maternal instructress who sought to give her the same kind of education that she, herself, had received, with the exception of dancing, which would have been quite heterodox for the daughter of a conservative Baptist minister in the eighteen-seventies. Her schooling had been seclusive, even in the year spent in Germany studying music. She was shy and studious; she was slight and delicately formed in contrast with the huge soldier son of Dr. Bliss. On closer acquaintance she revealed a sense of whimsical humor to match his own. She said:

"I always told Tasker that he only took me because my mother was not available. I was just second choice. He married me to get a charming and learned mother-in-law."²

It was a long courtship, a real siege, in which she appeared at times most discouragingly uninterested, before he won her, with the aid of Mrs. Anderson.

¹ Letters from Bliss to Mrs. George W. Anderson, 1878-81, among the Bliss family papers.

² Mrs. Bliss to the author.

"Last night I sat up until some time after midnight working my way blindly through a mass of German. I got up early to continue the same work. To-night I have been at it again, not because my heart was in it, but to give employment to my thoughts which were making me very restless and uneasy. When Nellie's letter came yesterday telling me that Dr. Strawbridge had spoken of the advisability of sending Edward to Florida, I felt quite sure of what the next word would be."¹

Nellie accompanied her ill brother to Florida, and while Tasker wrote every day to Nellie he wrote almost as frequently to Mrs. Anderson asking her for any news about Nellie, and picturing old St. Augustine, with its historical memories, as he saw it in imagination with her.

The pair were now engaged; they were looking forward to marriage when Ellen was stricken with partial deafness. Experts said the affliction would be permanent. She insisted upon breaking the engagement. She would not be a deaf mate for any man no matter how much she loved him, she would not hamper his career when she could never hear anything that anybody had to say unless it was shouted—the deaf wife of Lieutenant Bliss, of Captain Bliss, the deaf first lady of the post which one day Colonel Bliss might command.

So she wrote to him; so she told him when he came to see her. A most eloquent logician, now, he insisted he had not fallen in love with her ears, but her mind and heart and the dearest face in the land. He could not take back the love he had given her and he would not allow her to take back the love she had given him because, at twenty-nine, he was already getting bald. Would she desert him if he also became deaf and rheumatic? Was that the kind of soldier she was? And wasn't he understanding every word she said? He always would. They would be united the more firmly. He stormed, he was gay—and she yielded.

No treatment, no new instrument, was ever to bring her positive relief, and ever when the two were in a group of people he made it a practice to stand or sit near her. Thus he was able, in clear familiar enunciation and a moderate tone which she understood, to repeat deftly anything said to her and take the effort out of the occasion for the others present.

¹ Letter from Bliss to Mrs. George W. Anderson, January 15, 1878.

She trained herself to make her affliction unembarrassing to others, sought to avoid the monotonous tone of the deaf; for she understood that there was sympathy for the blind but not the deaf, who were inclined to irritability over having missed something in the conversation. She must appear interested but not talk much herself lest this require that people strain their voices in talking to her. Now her natural shyness withdrew her into an isolated world to look out of the window upon the procession. She must ever make a smile take the place of normal hearing.

The effect upon Bliss' career was to stabilize him in his natural bent; he had a new duty in conflict with one he thought he owed to himself and the service in rounding out his professional training. When the Custer massacre occurred he became restless as an instructor at West Point and sounded possibilities of transfer to the cavalry, but General Schofield did not encourage this plan. Bliss had a four-year appointment at the Academy, and ought to see it through.

After the punitive sequel to the Custer massacre Indian alarms lapsed. Still Bliss thought that he ought to have a tour on the frontier, which he hoped to arrange. If he had gone his garrison might have missed action in the final Indian campaigns of the Black Hills and against the Apaches. At least, his preparation for his future unique rôle would have been halted. It continued because he hesitated at the prospect of taking his young wife to a remote frontier post where she could not easily withdraw herself from unceasing contacts and she would be more sensitive about her affliction.

They were married quietly in her father's home, May 24, 1882, their bridal trip in keeping with many before and since in the army. They crossed the continent on his way to Fort Mason, California. This detail was quite brief. The next year they settled to house-keeping back at Fort Monroe under the casemates with eighteen feet of earth over their heads, which required fires in midsummer to dry their moist quarters.

In the course of army routine he served as adjutant and honor graduate of the artillery school, and as recorder of a board to study the military value of our inland highways, which meant travel in his own country. So marked had his reputation as a broad student

become in the inner army circles that he appeared the obvious selection in answer to a request from Admiral Luce in 1885 for an army officer to teach military science at the new Naval War College at Newport.

The Adjutant General had already written out the orders when Bliss called on him to explain why he did not want to accept the detail for two years as settled. There was no doubt of the attractiveness or the honor of it. He would have a free hand for study, he would be his own master. It was equivalent to the separate command which appeals to every young officer.

But Bliss thought it best that the Naval War College try him out in a series of introductory lectures. If these promised well he would be invited to remain; and if not, Admiral Luce would not have to retain him.¹ He said that all he had learned about military science was from books and from talks with Civil War commanders; other students had the same opportunities.

Not only did the Naval War College want him to remain, but his lectures had shown such a profound understanding of the subject from Cannae to Appomattox that it was concluded to send him abroad to observe European military systems and bring his knowledge up to date. Mrs. Bliss followed him with their infant daughter, Eleanor, and her invalid brother, Edward, on a visit to Sussex, and he joined them in Edinburgh after his tour.

The officer of the little army of scattered posts, with its out-of-date arms, studied the living text books of the great armies of Europe which were trying out new tactics, new formations and new weapons in the field of maneuver. He had his first contact with the play of the forces toward the day when they should cross his desk at Versailles in 1918. A new Germany looked seaward, her young navy rising on the tide of her industrial expansion. Bismarck was still Chancellor, old Kaiser William I on the throne, and they had the counsel of von Moltke, the military scholar, the victor of Königgrätz, Gravelotte and Sedan. It always seemed that physically von Moltke's and Bismarck's position should have been reversed; von Moltke's to have been cast for the quiet, suave, silent chancellor behind the throne in an ancient monarchy, and Bismarck for old convention's thundering part of the soldier. Von Moltke had com-

¹ Letter from Bliss to Colonel Michael J. Lenihan, March 16, 1923.

manded the largest armies that ever had taken the field; he was the preceptor of the military system which made Europe a continent of hostile armed camps under conscription.

It was after Bliss' retirement, after he had seen the machine that von Moltke founded beaten and reduced to a fragment that he wrote in a letter, which recalled his meetings with the German commanders of the war of 1870-71:

"All the old men, except von Moltke, who had served in the war, and were still living, were retired, but in spite of their age they all impressed me as men who were in remarkably good physical and mental condition. A number of them, including von Moltke himself, were military members of the Reichstag. I often heard them play their parts in debate showing the mental activity, the quickness of perception of very much younger men. Any morning when I went for an early walk in the Thiergarten, I would see von Moltke browsing over a secondhand bookstore near the Brandenburg gate. He was so spare that he looked as though his frame were held together by his uniform."

Bliss, himself an old man when he wrote this, but busy working for the cause of peace with the ardor of youth, added: "And so it behooves youth to qualify in other respects than youth. If it does so it holds the world in its grasp. *Si jeunesse savait, si vieillesse pouvait!*"¹

General John M. Schofield had read Bliss' reports from abroad with the knowing eye of his own mind and experience. As lectures they became classic at the Naval War College. Schofield had first sounded his depths as an instructor at West Point. And Schofield was the type to appreciate Bliss. He, too, was a scholar whom no soldier might dismiss as theorist, this favorite young commander of General William T. Sherman. In his youth he had been assistant professor of natural and experimental philosophy at West Point and later, resigning from the army, became professor of physics at Washington University in St. Louis. A brilliant and daring tactician in battle, a master of troop movements and organization, he rose to command of a Federal corps before he was thirty. When Schofield succeeded Sheridan who, in turn, succeeded Sherman as commanding general of the army, he summoned Bliss to his right hand as aide, and kept him there for seven years, 1888-95, until his

¹ Bliss to Major General E. F. McGlachlin.

own retirement. He was always sure that whether the problem was one of principle or of detail in the direction of the army, he could depend on Bliss' thoroughness to miss no item and lay a luminous analysis on his desk.

The active commander of the past had both a companion and a disciple. After desks were clear—and it was not much trouble to keep them so as army posts did their sentry go after the last of the Indian wars—general and aide could range far from the day's work in their discussions, which they might continue at home, since that useful aide lived near his chief. They could talk about peoples as well as wars. Bliss was fond of this. He liked all peoples; the French were the French, the English were the English, the Germans were the Germans. He did not know the Spanish or the Russians yet, but he hoped to.

Schofield deplored the condition of our army with no war college or staff schools to teach young officers how to think for a large army in case we had to go to war. That had been the difficulty in the early stages of the Civil War—just a mob of regiments without organization, with generalship having to be learned in the field of action at the cost of soldiers' lives. Schofield foresaw the mess which became inevitable in the Spanish War, when we found that drilling a company of infantry or a battery of artillery, or feeding a regiment is not all there is to war, no more so than being a conductor of a train is all there is to railroading.

Under the present system, as Schofield said:

“All that a major general, as well as an officer of lower grade had to do, was to execute such orders as he might receive from the brigadiers at the head of the several bureaus in Washington. It was not even necessary for those mighty chiefs to say that their mandates had the sanction of any higher authority. Their own fiat was all-sufficient for a mere soldier of the line or for his commanding general of whatever grade or rank or command.”¹

That frustrated veteran commander in the tape-bound doldrums of the time found that Bliss was not only an intellectual relief but that he had a way of keeping peace among the autocrats of the bureaus. Schofield was the first high superior who knew that he could “leave it to Bliss” with perfect confidence.

¹ *Forty-six Years in the Army*, Lieutenant General John M. Schofield, p. 535.

With one side of his mind Bliss did his official duties. The other side was free to give all its parts full range. He had a home, he had children, and he had a study where the desk was never clear, the study of the scholar littered with papers. He insisted that no bearer of a broom or a dust brush should enter it except under his personal supervision.

Never prone to take the lead in conversation unless his views were requested, he would draw others out on their special subjects which interested him. Was the subject China? Was it the brewing of beer? Then let us hear about how the mandarins rule China or beer is made. He spent hours learning every detail about the oyster business and the life of the oyster from an oysterman. The next time he met an oysterman he would be able to talk to him as intelligently as to a professor of Greek or a soldier. Not only this, but he had looked up the oyster in books and there learned some points the oysterman had missed.

The one who knew all his sides was Mrs. Bliss, who always called him Tasker. He loathed the contraction of Tad, which was never in vogue after his Lewisburg days. She knew him in his storms and his silences, and when he paced the floor, reinforced by a night cap, in high council in which he spoke the views of General Schofield, a commander of a western post, an Indian agent, a missionary and the local congressman on a given problem. She knew him when he admitted he had made a lot of fuss over nothing, when he stroked his mustache as a sign that here was a question that opened up an appealing line of thought, when he was gruff, and when his upper lip twitched in a characteristic half smile over something which amused him. She did not need the information from others that she had a philosopher for a mate, or that he belonged to the numerous band of human and temperamental husbands.

There was the incident of the Russian exercises which had its place in the family annals.¹ Bliss had met a polyglot Russian employee of the Treasury Department who would give him lessons in Russian. One evening he appeared in the home living room in volcanic indignation. Who in the devil had been in his study and taken his Russian exercises? Mrs. Bliss remarked that his study was

¹ Mrs. Bliss to the author.

such a disgrace that she had told the maid to sweep up the floor but to touch nothing above it.

"That's where I put them, on the floor, so I would know just where they were when I was ready to finish them this evening."

He was up for examination tomorrow—and all this labor lost! It was a damnable outrage that a man could not have personal liberty in his own home. Mrs. Bliss, smiling at the mountain of wrath, did not consider the catastrophe quite as serious as the fall of the Roman Empire, but she made a diligent search only to find that the exercises had been burned with other waste paper.

Bliss muttered and countermarched back to his study to renew the battle. There the light burned far into the night. But this was not unusual. He might be interested in the life of Epaminondas, Cæsar, Mozart, George Washington, Voltaire, an Indian pundit, or of a whale, or having one grand time with Horace, or determined to learn if his conclusion as to the man who did it was borne out by the finish of a detective story, or pacing the hall in one of his soliloquies. Nor was it unusual that he raided the ice box to sustain him as he kept up his siege against the difficulties of the Russian tongue. When he appeared for breakfast in the morning, he was fresh and triumphant.

"It's all right, Nellie," he said, "I did them over again, and I know I did them better."

Later, official evidence of his proficiency appeared:

"The following on the resistance of guns to tangential rupture by Colonel Pashkievitch, professor at the Michael Academy, St. Petersburg, Russia, translated from the Russian by Lieutenant Tasker H. Bliss, 1st Artillery, Aide-de-camp, is published for the information and use of the artillery by command of Major General Schofield."¹

At first, the Judge Advocate General ruled against General Schofield. There were no funds for its publication, but singularly enough we find that it was printed by the Government Printing Office in 1899. Another item in the War Department files shows that the General was more successful about Bliss' memorandum that the army should have for its information Captain Alfred T. Mahan's

¹ A.G.O. Artillery Circular A. February 12, 1892.

new book, *The Influence of Sea Power on History*, which became so renowned in Great Britain at the time when the overseas expansion of the colonial era was in its full tide. Funds were allotted for the distribution of one hundred and fifty copies among army posts.

In 1892, at the age of thirty-nine, Lieutenant Bliss had become a captain, but in the commissary. Otherwise he would have remained a lieutenant of artillery several years longer. Under the bureau system the commissary bought the army's food supplies and the quartermaster transported them. In a sense General Schofield's insistence upon keeping Bliss at his side promised to handicap Bliss' professional career, or would have if there had been any opportunity for action, or any prospect of relief from slow promotion. To line officers Bliss had become one of the bureau men in Washington, "a Manchu," a "swivel chair artist," which would leave him with the confirmed reputation of a desk soldier; but restless and ambitious line officers sought assignment to the bureaus, which were a permanent detail, as a means of advancement. The pay of a captain was welcome to Bliss to support his family.

However, not only did his position with Schofield keep him in touch with army organization, with political Washington and give him opportunity for study, but he was also Inspector of Artillery and Small Arms Practice, which kept him in touch with the line. In a small army he had personal knowledge of its personnel.

One day a young second lieutenant, George O. Squier, just out of West Point, called on Bliss. He had run up from Baltimore, where he was stationed at Fort McHenry—his duties occupied him only a few hours a day—in the same city with Johns Hopkins University, with its eminent teachers gathered under President Daniel Coit Gilman. He was at the doorway of the banquet room with no right to enter. Couldn't Captain Bliss arrange it so he would be allowed to take the course in physics and chemistry? From what he had heard about General Schofield this seemed possible.

"Have you leave to come to Washington?" And Bliss appeared very gruff.

"No, sir."

"Well, you better get that from your commanding officer next time." Bliss smiled. He was captivated by Squier's studious enthusiasm.

"Suppose you wait a year, and then we'll see if you are in earnest." ¹

In due course Squier received an order detailing him to study at Johns Hopkins. He won fame in the scientific world by his contribution to multiple telephony and his inventions, and afterward became Chief of the Signal Corps in the early period of our participation in the World War.

Bliss had not only done what was known in a later day as "ghost writing" for that portly old sage, General Schofield, but we find him drafting a farewell letter for President Cleveland to the veteran general upon his retirement.²

When Major General Nelson A. Miles succeeded Schofield, Bliss felt sure his long Washington service was at an end; but Secretary of War Daniel Lamont wanted him at his elbow, and so assigned him on special duty in the War Department. Since he was in the commissary, Bliss characteristically thought that he ought to have some first-hand experience in "counting the beans," which for him would mean studying the history of the classic article of food in the American army. He requested that a part of his leave might be spent at the quartermaster's office in New York learning how to keep records and about the purchase of bacon, sugar, and all the other items the army consumed.³

By this time our new steel navy, which had taken the place of the Civil War side-wheel relics, was building battleships, which were to be needed soon for the Spanish War. The army, on its part, was interested in a new smokeless powder repeating rifle of the European type in place of the old black powder Springfield; and, since our population, wealth and industrial power had been gaining so rapidly, we had become further aware of our defenselessness, and agitation had begun for modern guns for our coast defenses in place of antique cannon. Secretary Lamont asked Bliss to prepare a memorandum over night on European coast defenses, when information about them was given out to military attachés anything but freely, and the subject was so immense and technical. However, by sitting up two nights, Bliss managed an exposition which appeared most comprehensive to the Secretary, if it would not have to the

¹ Major General George O. Squier to the author.

² Letter to Mrs. Bliss, September 13, 1895.

³ Letter to Mrs. Bliss, May 28, 1896.

German General Staff.

When it came to drafting Lamont's final report before the incoming of the McKinley administration, Bliss "made it give full credit to his predecessor," a Republican, for the foundations he had laid, "although most of the work had been done under Lamont"; and Lamont, in that era of strong political partisanship, gallantly accepted the paragraph.¹

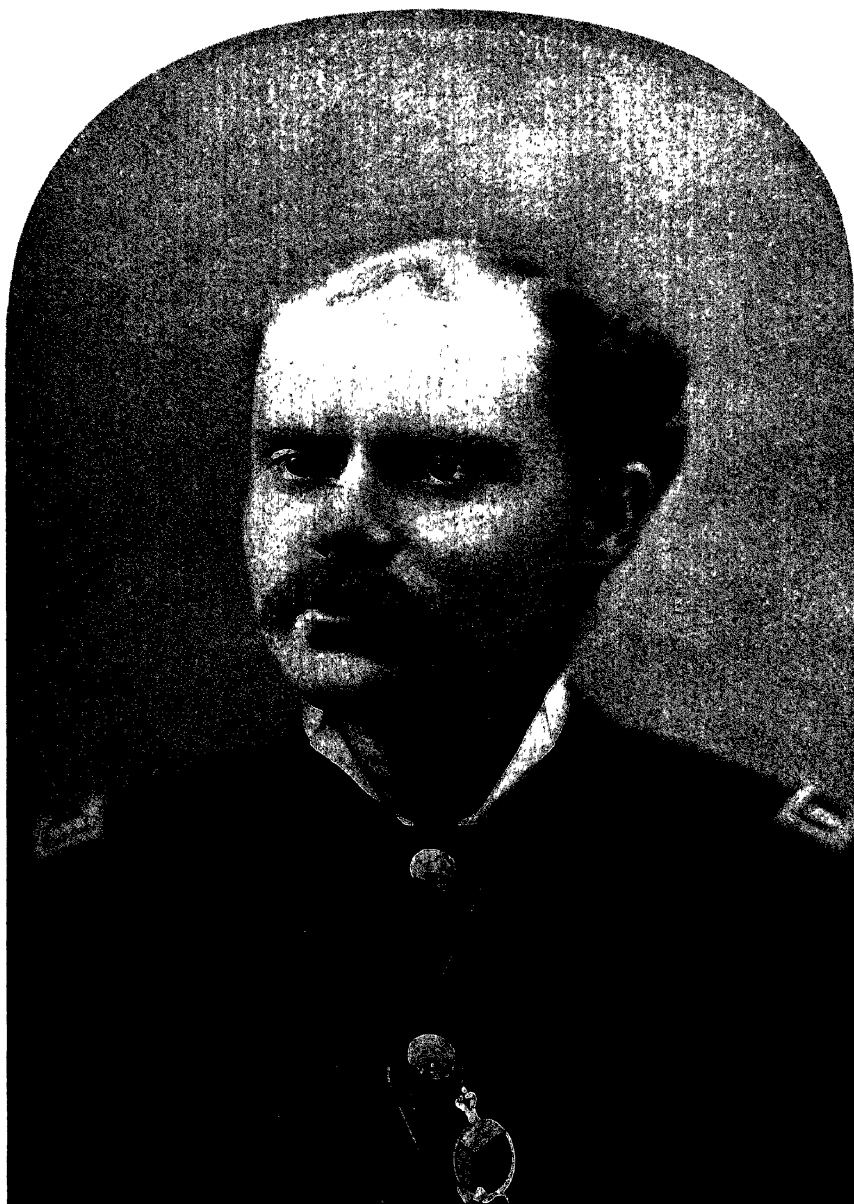
With the close of Lamont's term, March 3, 1897, Bliss was detailed in his forty-fourth year back to familiar ground at Fort Monroe as commissary officer. In his nine years in Washington he had something like a permanent home. His father had died on March 27, 1893. A second child, a son, Goring, had been born in 1892. Before him on his captain's pay was the prospect of educating his children and of continuing to count the beans for the rest of his army career, while the only hope of a star before its conclusion was to be made the commissary chief of the army. But now a black patch had appeared on the national horizon, a patch which grew into a cloud as Spain shipped more and more troops to Cuba and her campaign became harsher in suppressing the Cuban rebellion.

The McKinley administration faced our growing resentment against the interference with our trade and against the methods of "Bloody Weyler," the Captain General in Cuba. In those days, before Hay and Root began the reorganization of our diplomatic service, after the Spanish War gave us place as a world power with new responsibilities, the practice that to the victor belonged the spoils had exceptions only in a few veteran secretaries of legations and consular clerks who had been for many years. Henry White served as Secretary of Legation in London from 1886 to 1905, and Henri Vignaud in Paris from 1885 to 1909.

We must have a few knowing nestors who spoke the language to instruct the new comers in diplomatic etiquette and provide a thread of continuity through administrations. Yet even secretaries of legation were often changed with the change of party in power in Washington. Outside the army and navy, which kept intrenched in its technique, especially the navy, the only permanent servants were the force of government clerks.

For Minister to Spain McKinley chose that robustious and stal-

¹ Letter to Mrs. Bliss, November 9, 1896.



AT THE TIME OF HIS MARRIAGE

wart party man and Civil War veteran, General Stewart L. Woodford, who had a sound common sense and willingness to listen to an adviser, which might better have equipped him for his mission than the lack of it if he had had knowledge of Spain and the Spanish language. On June 27, 1897, Secretary of State Sherman had protested in the name of humanity against Weyler's concentration order.¹ In her answer on August 4, Spain had protested against the mischievous action of the Cubans and pointed out that Weyler's measures were no more severe than Sheridan's in the Shenandoah Valley or Sherman's in Georgia, which it was hardly politic to publish in the United States.² This answer came ten days after Woodford sailed for his new post, and meanwhile public agitation in the United States had reached a point which literally demanded that Weyler should go. If he did not, war seemed inevitable.

When the army canvassed personnel for a military attaché to accompany Woodford, it chose one low in rank for the post, the master of military science familiar with army organization, who was incidentally a commissary captain.

Not only limited family finance and the care of her children prevented Mrs. Bliss' going with her husband, but he was very positively advised by the War Department not to take her, in view of the serious crisis which might bring war before he had been many days in Spain. On the occasions when they were separated not only was he her ears but her eyes, picturing in the smallest detail what he saw and where and how he lived. In his first instalment of a long letter, written on board ship, he said:

"I am afraid to send all my love on one ship lest it be more than it can carry."

But he was surprised to find that four women, Mrs. Woodford, her daughter, and two cousins, were in the Woodford party to see Spain under official auspices. The prophet foresaw that this might prove embarrassing, and so it was, especially to him.

¹ Spanish Diplomatic Correspondence and Documents, 25.

² *Ibid.*, 28.

V

DECISIVE DAYS IN SPAIN

To AN officer war meant promotion, opportunity, the expansion of the army. Bliss wrote on board ship to Mrs. Bliss:

"This evening, after dinner, General Woodford asked me to smoke a cigar with him, and we had a long talk about the Cuban situation. He asked my opinion of it and that of army officers generally.

"I told him that I did not believe the matter was worth a war under any circumstances; that I thought we should convince the Spaniards that we meant to deal fairly with them; and that it was infinitely better for us to persuade them to grant such reforms as would restore peace and prosperity and revive our trade relations with Cuba, leaving the island under Spanish control, than to force an issue merely for seizing the island."

In London, where Woodford paused, Bliss wrote pages of description to son Goring, then aged five, of all the sights, including the Beef Eaters and the Tower, as though they were new to him. And the son's grandmother Bliss, who was still living and sprightly, said to Goring: "You will certainly know that Charles I had his head cut off," and in her thrift she wondered how many pairs of shoes Tasker would wear out tramping about the old world.

He blamed himself for a mistake in the ship's sailings which would leave Mrs. Bliss for a week without a letter from him.

"I was getting my papers in order," he wrote to her from Paris, "and feeling pretty blue. When Dyer¹ brought in a letter from you I could have danced a *pas seul*." He visited Père la Chaise "to see the graves of your grandmama and the members of your family buried there." The kindly clerk in the bureau ran his eye "over a couple of hundred volumes of records, and finally pulled down the one desired and showed me the original entry somewhat faded on a page quite yellow with age.

"He made out a transcript which I enclose. The graves are in the most pleasing part of the cemetery. Close to them is an exquisitely beautiful,

¹ Lieutenant George L. Dyer, naval attaché to Spain.

tiny park-like space, with the greenest possible grass and the prettiest flowers. Moreover, as no recent interments have been made in this part, there are none of the harrowing evidences of grief which often oppress one in such a place. . . . One feels as if he were looking on a healed scar that carries no suggestion of pain. . . . I bought three little pots of flowers to put on the graves as a tribute from you.”¹

The Spanish authorities, fearing that Woodford might be met with a hostile demonstration owing to the assassination of Premier Canovas by an anarchist, requested that he postpone his arrival in Spain. This delay in Paris extended to three weeks.

“I am like the man in the rhyme that Eleanor and I used to repeat when she was little, who said he

‘was going to the North Pole to see the great white polar bear;
and whether I like it I will let you know when I get there.’”²

But he was not wasting his time or spending it all in sight seeing. He had begun brushing up his Spanish as soon as he received his appointment, and had found a good Spanish teacher in Paris.

“I finished my Spanish lessons on Saturday. My teacher said that in a month after getting to Madrid I should be speaking Spanish as well as English. Indeed, I was surprised to find I could carry on a conversation on simple subjects and both understand and make myself understood. I shall work hard at it and try to get that much good out of this detail.”³

On August 30 he wrote that Woodford had told him that the Conservative Party, of which Canovas had been the chief, would try to force an issue with the United States in order to retain power. Such was the state of public opinion at home under the goad of the agitators that this would mean war. Two days later, when the Woodford party started for Spain, it looked as though the minister’s stay might be brief but exciting. Bliss had no sleeper; he had to sit up all night. He wrote that he looked out on the same stars which were shining over Nellie and the children, and he saw “the sun rising magnificently through great banks of gold and purple tinted clouds.”

Ten thousand descriptions of the part of France he saw from a

¹ Letter to Mrs. Bliss from Paris, August 16, 1897.

² To Mrs. Bliss, August 24, 1897.

³ To Mrs. Bliss, August 28, 1897.

car window did not preclude the thoughtful soldier from seeing it with a fresh eye.

"Everywhere there were vineyards kept with the most scrupulous care, and every here and there, generally perched upon the summit of a hill, was a typical château such as one sees in pictures, with steep roofs and towers and pinnacles, each of which has given its name to some more or less celebrated wine, which comes from the vines beneath the walls. Sometimes the château has in its vicinity a church and a cluster of houses. Sometimes the church and houses were there without the château, but almost invariably on little sugar loaf hills, showing their origin in a time when the hilltops were places not only against the violence of overflowing waters, but against the violence of man as well."¹

In apprehension of the "violence of man," Spanish soldiers and police were placed on Woodford's train at the Spanish frontier and drawn up in force for his protection upon his arrival in San Sebastian. In 1886 the Spanish court had made San Sebastian the summer capital, and therefore the resort of the diplomatic corps and the fashionable watering place. It thrived and grew, providing entertainment for its generously spending guests in other pleasures than the new bullring, which Bliss remarked were also supported "by Christian men and women from America who wanted to see the sights."²

No movement of an American minister had ever been watched with more European interest than that of Woodford to Spain. He had the center of the stage in that old Europe where the young United States had as yet only legation rank. Diplomatic circles had reason to believe that he was bringing an ultimatum to Spain; and this might mean that modern ships of war would have their first test; a strange war which Europe would see as detached spectator. The general view was that the land which sent out inexperienced political leaders as diplomats who spoke no language but their own might have a surprise for its wealth against an old and gallant martial nation.

With the government as well as the Queen located at San Sebastian, the American minister remained there for three weeks in which

¹ To Mrs. Bliss from San Sebastian, September 2, 1897.

² To Mrs. Bliss from San Sebastian, September 9, 1897.

he had many conferences which brought little encouragement. Bliss told Mrs. Bliss to read the papers but not to worry. He assured her in his description of the enormous meals provided at his hotel that he had enough to eat when the fruit season was at its height.

"The breakfast is simply a big dinner, and the dinner about three breakfasts in one. But the desserts—I mean the fruits—would almost make you forswear your allegiance to the United States. The grapes and the figs are direct from the gardens of paradise. You take off the rind of a fig, and put it in your mouth, and instantly it is gone: you don't know where, but while you are wondering you find yourself being permeated by a sense of sweetness as if (I shall speak for myself now) all the smiles that you have ever smiled have been liquefied into one precious drop. It is an imponderable barbarism to say that one eats a fig here. In some way one absorbs it, makes it a part of oneself, but one might as well talk of eating an evanescent dream or the hue of a rainbow."¹

Meanwhile the soldier who had been sent by the War Department to Spain to make military reports had become the counselor of General Woodford in diplomacy.

"You may be sure that I will advise nothing that is not right in the sight of God and all reasonable Americans."²

More Americans were becoming unreasonable every day; and the Spanish attitude more hostile. Bliss heard remarks in the street about the infernal Americans, accompanied by angry glances. On September 23 Woodford presented a formal note to the Spanish government setting forth the urgency of the situation, tendering our good offices, and adding the reminder that our Congress, which had passed a strong resolution the previous year³ would convene again in December, with public opinion calling for prompt action. An early answer was requested.⁴ The next day Bliss wrote:

"Mr. MacArthur is taking all the ladies to Biarritz until the situation clears up, and the General, Lieutenant Dyer expect to leave tomorrow for Madrid. Your letters to me are not touched, but mine to you may be."⁵

¹ To Mrs. Bliss from San Sebastian, September 9, 1897.

² To Mrs. Bliss from San Sebastian, September 15, 1897.

³ Spanish Diplomatic Correspondence and Documents, 28.

⁴ Foreign Relations, 1898, p. 568.

⁵ To Mrs. Bliss from San Sebastian, September 24, 1897.

On the same day Woodford sent this cable to Secretary of War Russell A. Alger about our military attaché to Spain:

"His services have been simply invaluable. An admirable linguist, a cultivated gentleman, a trained officer and a most thorough and wise man, he has been my trusted adviser."¹

From Madrid, five days later, Bliss wrote:

"Our work is most serious, and I am at it night and day. For reasons you can understand General Woodford does not have work done by the regular personnel of the legation. So I do the typewriting."²

Vigilantly and earnestly Woodford strove to prevent war, in keeping with President McKinley's hope, and this must have been one reason why he found Bliss' own attitude so valuable. Woodford took great care to observe all the amenities. When the court officer who acted as "the introducer of ambassadors" told him that it was not obligatory, but a courtesy, that the diplomatic corps should be at the station when the Queen returned from San Sebastian, Woodford replied in his gallant fashion: "All acts of courtesy are obligatory on the American Legation."³ Bliss was affected by the careworn look of the Queen Regent, accompanied by the little Alfonso.

She returned to a chaotic political situation while the American note awaited answer. Until this came the legation marked time in the midst of calls for information from Washington and the preparation of extensive reports. Bliss could rejoice only over the inexpensiveness of his quarters, which permitted more money for the home budget. He had the feeling that the legation was under siege. He met no Spaniards except officially. He was in Spain, but having no chance to be friendly and study Spain.

"It is strange how thoroughly homesick this country makes me. In England, France, or even in Italy, especially Germany, I find so many things that are like home and the things that are different are attractive enough to reconcile the difference. I long for the chance to see the rest of Spain and take the taste of Madrid out of my mouth. Perhaps this is due to the bullfight I saw last Thursday, the sights and sounds of which

¹ War Department Records.

² To Mrs. Bliss from Madrid, September 29, 1897.

³ Ibid.

I cannot get out of my head. God forgive me for going. I can think of nothing that would take me to another.”¹

Sagasta and a Liberal ministry came into power on October 14. Three days later General Blanco was named in place of General Weyler as Captain General of Cuba. All this seemed encouraging. On the 23rd came the answer to the American note. It promised autonomy to Cuba, but asked the United States for better enforcement of her neutrality laws.²

The autonomy decree having been signed on November 27, President McKinley could say in his annual message to Congress that it was only fair to give the new régime a test, and he stated that no American citizen, so far as our government knew, was then in arrest or in Cuba.³

The present crisis was over; it looked on the paper as though war might be averted. Certainly the legation had a breathing space. The ladies of the legation returned from their not unpleasant exile at Biarritz to Madrid in time for the royal reception. At this ornate ceremony of the ancient and formal court only Minister Woodford was not in uniform, as Bliss remarked, his black on the background of gold and silver. Bliss' picture of the arrival of the guests, which he described so minutely for his Nellie, is worth quoting for its contrast with White House functions in McKinley's day and Secretary of State Sherman's shirtsleeves diplomacy when so soon the democracy was to expel Spain from the last of the possessions of her once mighty empire on the western hemisphere. It was manner's echo of past greatness, which preceded by twenty-one years its end by the World War in Vienna, Potsdam and Saint Petersburg.

“At the ends of every other step, facing inwards, stood the halbardiers of the royal guard motionless, with their long pikes surmounted by the axe and spear. Looking up from the foot I saw numbers of gentlemen and ladies ascending, but so long is the stairway that they seemed like scattered people climbing a lofty but gentle hill. Here I had my first lesson in Spanish court etiquette. The people walked with the slowest and most grave and sedate pace. They seemed to glide rather than walk.

“I can give you no idea of the exquisite coloring. The stairway was lighted, not brilliantly, but almost as though a soft moonlight were fall-

¹ To Mrs. Bliss from Madrid, October 9, 1897.

² Foreign Relations, 1898, p. 582.

³ Richardson, Messages and Papers. X, 131.

ing on it. The ladies' cloaks were some dark, some white, and occasionally there was a flash of jewels from under the lace head covering. Most of the men wore long cloaks coming down to their feet, which looked exceedingly graceful. The four great military orders of Spain, of ancient foundation, are distinguished, among other ways, by the color of their cloaks, being of white or purple or scarlet or black velvet satin. And, as the men are generally tall and fine looking, you can imagine the scene which that great stairway presented, with those grave figures in long brilliant cloaks and nodding plumes ascending in the soft light, with the motionless halberdiers guarding the way. And to get the full effect of the picture you must bear in mind that it was not a throng, but only one or two figures from a past age. . . ."¹

This had been for Mrs. Bliss, but he also wrote a letter to his daughter Eleanor, aged fifteen, about this royal reception in honor of the Saint's day of the little king, which had in reality all the sumptuousness and resplendency of later motion picture royal functions in simulation.²

"We were about the middle of the line, almost directly opposite the throne. On our right was the English embassy and beyond that the Chinese; on our left the Turkish embassy, then the French, German, Austrian, Russian and the Papal Nuncio. . . . I think I have already described the Russian ambassador's court dress. He wore white trousers laced with heavy silver embroidery and a dark blue coat that was one mass of frosted silver lace. As he is an immense man he looks quite like an impersonation of the Polar bear. . . . Hardly were we in position, when by the same door that we had entered, came the Grandees of Spain, some thirty or forty in number. All, of course, were in court dress, knee buckles and silk stockings, and wearing an infinity of jeweled decorations among which, but not numerous, was the great chain and order of the Golden Fleece. Among them was the Duke of Tetuan who did not seem to look upon the party with much pleasure. These were followed by the Captains-General and they by the Cabinet ministers. These all passed slowly and gravely through the room, and ranged themselves on the right of the throne, facing the diplomatic corps, the ministers being nearest the throne.

"By the lower lion on the right of the throne, Premier Sagasta stood during the entire reception, leaning on it with his arm resting on its back, his shrewd, fox-like, dried up face, like yellow parchment, turned toward us, and his black piercing eyes roving over the throng. I am told that this is his usual attitude at such receptions when he is a Min-

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, from Madrid, January 23, 1898.

² To Miss Eleanor Bliss, January 24, 1898.

ister. Immediately after this party came the Queen Regent with the King walking at her right. The King wore the uniform of a Spanish cadet. The poor little fellow will not be twelve until the 17th of next May. He looks very delicate and I fear he has not a happy life before him. They approached the throne from the left and reaching the lower step they turned and bowed. Then we all made a profound bow, and then stood motionless. The Queen Regent wore a magnificent tiara of diamonds. The train of her gown must have been twenty feet long and was carried by a gorgeously dressed officer of the household. As she ascended the steps of the throne he allowed the train to fall, so that when she turned and sat down the train fell in graceful folds and laid several feet on the floor."

And so after them came the other princesses and the great ladies, "some of whom were beautiful and some of whom were not," as Bliss remarked. It interested him that the superior of the convent opposite his window at the legation, although a grandee, might not be present since she might never leave the convent.

"It was very amusing to watch them, as I could not help doing, since they were directly opposite me. The long ceremony became very tiresome to me, and I knew it must be more so to them. They had to stand perfectly still—the King, Queen, Infanta Isobel and Don Antonio were the only ones who sat down—and I noticed one fat lady with a splendid dress and a perfectly tremendous weight of jewels on her who finally looked as though she would topple over. . . . All the ex-Cabinet Ministers, the officials of Madrid civil and military, the knights of the great military orders of Santiago, Alcántara, Colatrava and Montesa, with their splendid robes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests and monks, abbots and priors went by in solemn procession. If you really wish to understand what the scene was like you must read a page of Froissart.

"Each as he passed made four profound bows; one to the King, one to the Queen Regent, to the Infanta Isobel and Don Antonio. Then they straightened up and went slowly and solemnly out of the room. At times I felt almost as if I were at the Court of Ferdinand and Isabella. . . . The strangest sight to me was the cowed monks, with their coarse robes, their rope girdles, and with bare feet in sandals that only covered the bottom. They looked handsomer and prouder than any of the others. . . . When the last one had filed through the room the King and Queen Regent descended the steps and spoke to all the diplomats in line. As they addressed each one the secretaries and attachés bowed. Tell mamma that the carpets are more than one hundred years old and that it is very likely that I have stood where her grandpapa did if he ever visited the palace."

But of the functions on the little king's saint day Bliss seemed to get the most personal pleasure out of the gala performance of "La Gioconda" at the Royal Opera. "It has never been sung in the United States, and I wonder at it."

He was sensitive to the contrasts of court pomp and the poverty and misery. "It is a sad sight to see the beautiful shops and the poor starving women looking into the windows with longing eyes." ¹ From Corunna, the leading Spanish port for traffic with Cuba, he wrote:

"I watched the procession of boats landing the sick soldiers who return by every steamer from Cuba. There were 750 of them and long lines of ambulances and men with litters stood waiting for them. Women on shore, wives, mothers and sisters, I suppose, of the sick, were crying and some screaming at the sight of the death-like forms being landed from the boats." ²

And again when he was traveling:

"Most of these gloomy, forbidding and almost wretched looking houses had at one time been the residence of noble families. Over the doors, and at corners, when on street corners, were coats of arms carved in the stone. Some of the doors themselves were exquisite bits of Gothic or Byzantine. But within now live wine sellers and carpenters and washerwomen (for they wash clothes in Spain though they seldom do their faces) and in and out of these doors were passing the poorest of the poor." ³

For, after the first crisis was over with the decree of autonomy for Cuba, Bliss had his opportunity to learn Spain by travel in which he saw more than the Spanish army. He had leisure when in Madrid for hours in the Prado, to know the Spanish as human beings. He need not go to the bull fights, but he could study their origin and how they were related to Spanish history. He might indulge his propensity for cathedrals and old churches, and win the favor of priests and archivists to show him old manuscripts.

"You will think that I credit myself with ubiquity," he wrote to Mrs. Bliss, "for I have already left myself at two places: first, the door of the Escorial church, second at the cathedral of Luzo—while, as a matter of fact I am writing here in Madrid."

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, December 17, 1898.

² To Miss Eleanor Bliss, November 17, 1897.

³ To Mrs. Bliss, December 1, 1897.

We have a picture of the famous "Bloody Weyler" as Bliss saw him land at Barcelona.

"He is short, inclined to be stout, with black beard (except on the chin which is smooth), with eyes rather closely set together, and I thought an unpleasant face. He is evidently a cold, rather repellent man, which explains the lack of enthusiasm, for it seems to be the man, and not his methods, which are disliked."

One of Bliss' letters from Spain was twenty pages long, all in his legible hand. Those for young daughter Eleanor were to interest her and for little son Goring to interest him. He wrote to Eleanor from Corunna:

"I have seen a woman, with a basket as wide and long as your dining room table at home coming along a crowded street with it on her head, she being in either bare feet or pattering along nursing a baby. . . . Sometimes I have a desire to bump up against a fat woman who has a huge basket on her head, or a big can of milk or a jar of wine, and see what would happen. I suppose that I should hear some vigorous Spanish, for these people know how to handle their language. . . . While at Corunna I sent a telegram to Mr. MacArthur at the Legation saying in English, 'I am at the Hotel Ferro-Carolina.' On reaching here [Madrid] he showed me the enclosed. It means a lot of chumps have come to wait for another one. Telegrams here are received on a machine which prints the words. A large number of telegrams are sometimes on one strip of tape. The operator takes his shears and cuts them off, but not always at the right place. You will notice that the past participle of venir has the d omitted. That is universal in Spain outside of Castile."

He wrote very rapidly with a soft pencil or with a broad pointed pen. If a hard lead came to his hand by mistake there might be an Olympian expletive. In his latter days, when he received a suggestion that his handwriting was becoming less legible, he immediately began practicing to reform the tendency, with the proven success that his letters to the last were almost as easily read as print.

"I wrote you a ten page letter this afternoon and now I'll begin another," and the second on the same day was also ten pages.¹ "It is hard to see how I can ever finish my descriptive letters unless I get out of Spain and stop seeing things to describe."²

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, January 8, 1898.

² To Mrs. Bliss, January 21, 1898.

But in Mid-February sight seeing was over; his letters became brief.

"The situation here is very critical. Within 48 hours I hope we will receive a note that will start us on plain sailing again. . . . Our social position has become very disagreeable. The Americans are practically 'cut' by everybody except officials."¹

On February 9, with the Spanish cruiser *Viscaya* paying a friendly visit to New York harbor and the American battleship *Maine* to Havana harbor, tension had eased when the New York *Journal* had published the fac-simile of a letter by the Spanish Minister in Washington, Dupuy de Lôme, in which he called President McKinley "a bidder for the admiration of the crowd" and "a would be politician who tries to leave a door open behind him while keeping on good terms with the jingoes of his party." The next day Woodford conveyed the President's demand for Dupuy de Lôme's immediate recall. The answer was regret for the indiscretion and that the minister's resignation had been already accepted by cable. Four days later Washington instructed Woodford to request a formal disavowal of the minister's language. The answer to this is the note to which Bliss referred. Spain considered the resignation sufficient amend; Washington accepted the incident as closed.²

But on the evening of February 15 an explosion destroyed the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor, killing two of her officers and two hundred and fifty-eight of her crew. The United States sent a naval board of inquiry to Havana to determine whether the explosion was from an internal or external source.

"We have had two days of terrible suspense," Bliss wrote two days after the explosion. "I fully expected that it would lead to the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Spain." He mentions the calls of Spanish officials at the legation to express sympathy. "The Spanish government is alarmed about the effect in the United States." Spanish press dispatches from the United States said that sentiment in Washington and New York veered toward the view that the explosion had not been accidental, "and so the Spanish editorials today assume a nasty tone."³

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, February 15, 1898.

² Foreign Relations, 1898, pp. 1007-1020; Spanish Diplomatic Correspondence and Documents, 80-85.

³ To Mrs. Bliss, February 18, 1898.

Meanwhile the American government sought to restrain public indignation until the result of the investigation was known.

"Early this morning General Woodford sent for me to come to his house where I have been all day writing," Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, March 6.

"Yesterday the General decided to send Mr. MacArthur to Washington with dispatches," Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, March 13, "but changed his mind."

"All the information we get here," he wrote March 16, "points to a speedy end to our stay in Madrid. The Spaniards expect that war will come and are making preparations to meet it."

On the 19th MacArthur started for Washington. With him absent, Bliss wrote in pencil on the 20th:

"I have written so much with the pen today that I can scarcely make another intelligible word with it. . . . Things are looking gloomy here, but there is still hope. I have tried to persuade our party to get some of their ladies away, but they will not."

On March 21 we had the report of the American board of inquiry. It ascribed the explosion to a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of some of the magazines on the *Maine*.¹ A Spanish board of inquiry from the examination of witnesses concluded the *Maine* had been wrecked by an explosion in her forward magazine.² A plot by Cuban insurgents to bring America into war with Spain may have been responsible.³

Americans in their horror accepted the American board of inquiry's conclusion as proof of Spanish complicity in the assassination of the crew of a great battleship by its planned destruction. The conservatives were swept along with the tide of public anger. "Remember the Maine!" had already become a battle cry, while reports agreed that conditions in stricken Cuba had not improved and the grant of autonomy was only a futile and hypocritical gesture. Still President McKinley kept the door open for negotiations. Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, March 27:

"For the last three days and nights I have been working the cipher code, translating dispatches and putting others into cipher for Wash-

¹ Senate Documents, 55th Congress, 2nd session, No. 207.

² Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, VII, 900.

³ Long, *New American Navy*, I, 144.

ington. One came this morning of twenty-five pages of figures. . . . Today it is generally said that chances are 99 for war and 1 for peace. . . . The Minister has just come in with another long dispatch to be deciphered."

Woodford spoke for Washington in saying that we did not want Cuba, but peace there, and suggested an armistice until October 1, to which Sagasta seemed favorable if the insurgents asked for it. Two days later Sagasta made a counter proposal which Woodford informed Washington meant "the continuation of this destructive cruel and now needless war"; but Spanish assent to an armistice would bring a revolution in Spain.¹ Then, April 2, Woodford said he hoped against hope and he could not bring himself "to the firm belief that Spain, in the closing years of the nineteenth century will finally refuse on a mere punctilio, to offer immediate and effective armistice."

To Mrs. Bliss, April 2:

"I am writing a hasty line to say that a crisis is expected by Monday or Tuesday. I am getting all my papers in order so as to leave at a moment's notice. . . . If trouble comes we can all at the Legation say that we have done our best for peace."

Public opinion at home was rapidly forcing McKinley's hand. Washington informed Woodford, April 4, that the Spanish reply was unsatisfactory.²

Now Minister Woodford had become alarmed about the situation of the women of the legation. And who but that useful military attaché should be sent to accompany them across the border? Bliss did not relish the assignment, which took him away from his post on the threshold of war. European correspondents in Madrid turned a few gibes at his expense. He worried over his ridiculous position if he were on a railroad train returning to Madrid when relations were broken off.

On the 9th he was back in Madrid after leaving his charges at Biarritz, where they were told to remain while the legation waited on the President's message to Congress. Two days later the President's message in reviewing the whole situation proposed forcible

¹ Foreign Relations, 1898, p. 727.

² Ibid., p. 731.

American intervention as the only solution of the difficulty. Further action was left to Congress. Its decisive action still hung fire on April 17, the while diplomacy made its last gestures.

To Mrs. Bliss, April 17:

"Yesterday afternoon, after finishing my weekly letter to the Adjutant General, General Woodford brought me a letter which he had just written to the Marquis of Valdeiglorias, the Gentleman of the Bed-chamber. His badge of office is a gold key and he has the right of entrance to the Queen's or King's apartments at all hours. The letter was in answer to certain verbal questions propounded by the Marquis the day before and made certain suggestions to be communicated informally and unofficially to the Spanish government. As soon as I read it I protested strongly against sending it. I said that at this critical stage he could not write anything that would be unofficial, that while favorable action was being taken on his suggestions, the American Congress might do something that would run counter to them, and then the people here would say that they had been shamefully deceived and would have this letter in evidence. I advised him to send for the Marquis and talk with him as one man to another, because it was perfectly proper that the Marquis should be acquainted with the ideas of the letter. . . . After a long discussion, the General agreed that I was right and asked me to rewrite the letter for him in the form of a memorandum."

But he mentions how he had some relaxation from the legation problem that evening when he had a talk with Sir Donald MacKenzie, the veteran foreign editor of the London *Times*, about Asia, world politics and the future of India.

Two days later, April 19, the Congress passed its resolution authorizing the President to employ the armed forces of the United States to establish the independence of Cuba. The Spanish Minister asked for his passports; and Woodford for his.

Bliss had had his first training as a diplomatist; he had been on the inside of negotiations when two governments were trying to prevent the inevitable, which was forced by events, influences and emotions beyond their control, while either sought to place the onus of responsibility for it upon the other. As a soldier, his clear, balanced reports of the Spanish army, its organization, character, reserves, arms, supplies, transport, capabilities, training and tactics, in which there was then such intense interest in the War Department, now seem as professionally remote as those of the army of

Peter the Great.

In the evening, as the train put at the legation's disposal passed out of Madrid, then raging with war anger against the American bullies who were seen as having unjustifiably intervened in an affair which was not their own, a mob threw stones at the General's car from the parapet where it passed under a bridge. As the stones rattled on the roof, Woodford sprang out of bed in a very abbreviated undershirt, six-shooter cocked in hand, his moustache bristling, prepared to fight the whole Spanish army. He made a picture which Bliss relished in every detail. In Paris Bliss sent a cable to the War Department, "Nothing to do here."

What of the future of the commissary captain? He could hardly expect field action; his part would be to count the beans. He received orders to report to Washington; and in the War Department he found General Schofield's prophecy of the chaos that would come in the next war owing to lack of staff organization being abundantly, pathetically and ridiculously fulfilled, and to be tragically fulfilled in our disease-ridden home camps and the ill-equipped Santiago expedition with its heavy mortality from sickness. Officers' commissions were being passed out as social and political favors to the sons of influence who had no military drill. It was uncertain whether real command rested with the commanding general or the adjutant general. The regulars were hurrying to Tampa, an impracticable location owing to poor railroad facilities, and the volunteers, in the first flush of war enthusiasm, were being gathered in camps for training.

Bliss gave the benefit of his advice fresh from Spain to the various bureaus. Major General James H. Wilson, who had been one of the brilliant young leaders of the Civil War, wanted him as Chief Commissary of the First Corps at Chickamauga, and then made him Chief of Staff of the First Division. He missed Santiago but his division was in the Puerto Rican expedition.

VI

A BRIEF CAMPAIGN

"You have no idea how wearisome it is to work, work, work with a constant succession of orders involving change and finally countermanding everything," Bliss wrote from Charleston, where General Wilson's troops were to embark. The situation in Charleston in July, 1898, is testimony to how lucky we were to be against the Spaniards and not the Germans in the gay nineties.

"I told you a little about our work in fitting out the *Rita* and getting her to sea. We began to fit her out for General Wilson, then she was ordered to make ready for General Garretson's people, then to carry 500 Negro laborers to build wharves at Santiago. The work proper for our case was different from the others, and yesterday came a telegram from the War Department that was simply stunning. It shows the frightful state of confusion in which everything is.

"We telegraphed for authority on Wednesday night of last week to fit out the *Rita*. We got the authority and a large sum of money to do it with. A score of telegrams must have passed each way on the subject. We worked day and night until 7 P. M. when we cast off our lines and started seaward. Most of the work was done in a gale and downpour. Most of the staff except Colonel Biddle and myself were sick as soon as it was over. When the steamer sailed we telegraphed the fact to Washington and also at once mailed a written report recommending certain permanent changes to equip her as a troop ship as soon as she returned from Santiago.

"Now will you believe this? Yesterday General Wilson received a telegram from the War Department saying that it was understood that a Spanish prize called the *Rita* was in Charleston harbor, that it had been recommended to the War Department that she might be used as a transport, and directing General Wilson to examine her and give his views on the subject. And she was nearing Santiago with 500 troops on board."¹

After more confusion Wilson's corps was sailing tropic seas in midsummer to join the Puerto Rican expedition. The windscoops for the portholes of the transport had not been delivered.

¹ To Mrs. Bliss from Charleston, July 15, 1898.

"When the officers," Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, "could not stay in their staterooms, you can imagine what it was for the men below. Everyone would have been prostrated if we had not brought them on deck."

The troops landed at Ponce; American soldiers had their first surprise in the excellent Spanish military road under their feet in the days before the advent of the automobile lifted the United States out of the sloughs onto hard surfaces. They marched on after the retreating Spaniards who were falling back for the defense of San Juan.

On the morning of August 11 it looked as though the Spaniards were about to make a stand. When General Wilson viewed the front neither he nor any member of his staff present had a pair of field glasses. Many officers of our little army before the war felt that they could not afford a pair; and, after the war began, the supply was unequal to the demand. So Lieutenant Palmer E. Pierce loaned his glasses to the General who gave orders to develop the enemy, but the Spaniards soon developed themselves by some volleys from a trench.¹ Before we formed for attack, Bliss appeared, and rode on toward the Spanish lines.

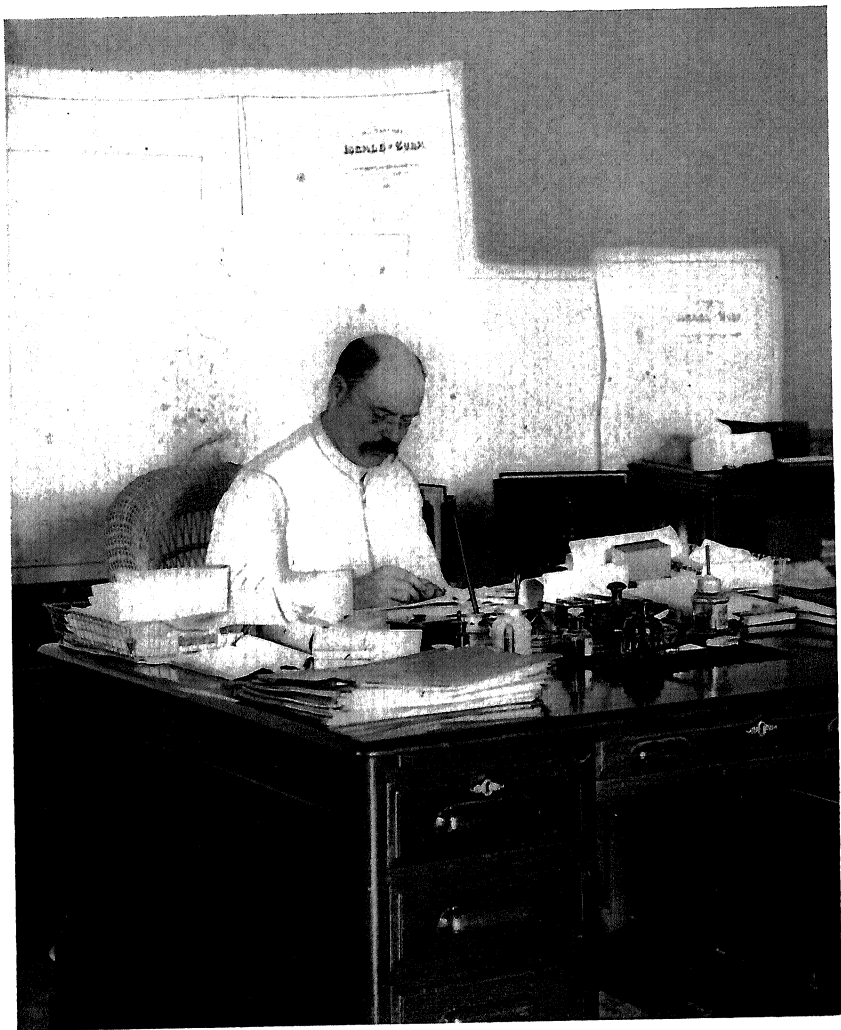
"Colonel Bliss of General Wilson's staff went forward to the enemy line with a flag of truce, and explained that peace negotiations were almost concluded, and that their position was untenable and demanded their surrender. The Spanish had no communication with the outside world, and the commander asked until tomorrow morning in order that he might communicate with Governor General Macias at San Juan."²

As Bliss described it to Mrs. Bliss, "I fixed up a flag of truce from a bed sheet, and rode up the road."

On August 12, the next day, the peace protocol was signed. The pomp which Bliss saw at the royal reception in Madrid had now become the completely empty relic of Spanish dominion in America. Her final salute to it had been the last volley her troops had fired on the road to San Juan. She had kept faith with her honor, and the proud memory that did not pass with her empire, by not yielding suppliantly to the inevitable on the demand of the new power; and the noble bearing of gallant Admiral Cervera in defeat had

¹ Brigadier General Palmer E. Pierce to the author.

² Richard Harding Davis, dispatch in the *New York Herald*, August 11, 1898.



BLISS IN HIS OFFICE IN HAVANA

touched American imagination in revival of old time chivalry which gave wars a polite and gentlemanly aspect.

Our soldiers had learned to like the "old Spaniard" personally; they had found the Cuban insurgents hardly the brave idealists of our public imagination in our early war emotion. While Spain might live with her memories, unfretted by any overseas rebellions except of the Riffs, we must turn, when war enthusiasm was dead, to the onerous and unromantic task which her maladministration and Caribbean inheritance had left us in indoctrinating in democracy the peoples we had delivered from her rule.

American character faced a more acute challenge after the Spanish War than in the war. The provisional period of reconstruction and induction into civil rule must rest with our army. Our officers, who had been lifted out of the ruts of peace routine, must expand their minds over a new field in a strange experience. Their varied degrees of capability had the common quality of honesty which we expect from them. We were committed to Cuban independence, but we would retain Puerto Rico. Since Bliss was to be one of the chief burden bearers in the next ten years his comments on the Puerto Rican conditions, written on the day that the peace protocol was signed, are interesting.

"The hatred of the different classes for each other is worse than for the Spanish. They seem to regard our coming as only for the purpose of putting the outs in and enabling each individual to get even with his neighbor. The mayors are government appointees. The native radical party thought all these would be turned out of office.

"But these mayors are generally the most solid men in the country. They are all natives, pro-Spanish in their sympathies. . . . But their property and interests are here, they will live here, and our object must be to make them good Americans . . . also to make all the people feel that our coming does not mean a domestic revolution, but that things are to go on pretty much as before without any upheaval. Changes will come in the system in time, but all that will be done when heated passions have cooled."¹

Returning from Puerto Rico in late September, after having had a few days with his family who were at the old Bliss home in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, he was sent as one of the board to select camp-

¹ To Mrs. Bliss from Ponce, Puerto Rico, August 12, 1898.

sites for our army of occupation in Cuba. Only an appeal to the imagination can bring home to a later generation the conditions of Cuba at the time, which must be realized in order that we may have at least a thrill of national pride for our work after the Spanish War, although we are now inclined to take a light view of the war itself as an exotic and picaresque adventure.

The Havana which tourists of a later time saw as a clean city with modern hotels and golf courses had been the pesthole of yellow fever, that scourge of the tropics at our very door, which had been another reason for intervention in Cuba. The discovery that its germ was communicated by the mosquito did not come until after our occupation of Cuba, and this led to the Rockefeller campaign which eventually eliminated it from the western hemisphere. It was in Cuba that Bliss had his first real contact with human perversity as exemplified in war's destruction.

"The insurgents have destroyed everything that belonged to Spaniards or Spanish sympathizers and the Spaniards have destroyed everything that belonged to the Cubans. Every hill top is crowned with a block house, villages surrounded by block houses, and the line of railroad bristles with them. . . .

"We came back by the village not far from which are the hospitals where there are over three thousand yellow fever patients. It is this disease that makes our problem so difficult. The fever always exists here. The records show that for 160 years there has been only one month without yellow fever. These cases occur among a comparatively small part of the population which is not immune. If we bring over thousands of men from the north there is no reason why they should be exempt from epidemic. . . . As for me I shall protest against bringing troops here until the healthiest sites are selected and every possible precaution against infection has been taken.

"The harbor of Havana is indescribably filthy. You could not believe that sea water could get into such a condition. The harbor is so situated that no current can get in and out of it, and there is the accumulated filth of centuries. There are parts of the city where it is said that no person not immune has ever passed a night and escaped yellow fever. The best protection seems to be to live temperately and not to go out doors at night"¹ [when the malign influences of the bad air had not been ascribed to the nocturnal forays of the mosquitoes].

"No description can give you any idea of the filthiness of this city [Havana] and the whole country as far as I have seen it. Indeed, 'man

¹ To Mrs. Bliss from Havana, October 13, 1898.

alone is vile.' Nature does her best. The air swarms with scavenger vultures. As I write they wheel in circles over the public square in front of the hotel, every now and then swooping down to the ground. And this in the most fashionable part of Havana! Residents tell me it has always been so. The arrangements in the best houses are such that you would not live in them for twenty-four hours. . . ."

And then a family matter back in the land which boasted of its leadership in the new era of sanitation!

"I am glad Eleanor changed her algebra class. Tell her she need be in no hurry. The object for her in such a study is to strengthen the reasoning process in certain directions that languages do not reach. That is done by going slowly and understandingly."¹

The campsites selected, what next for the captain of regulars who held a commission as a commissary lieutenant colonel of volunteers? We were occupying a Spanish speaking country; he spoke Spanish; he knew Cuba through his recent investigation; the commissary represented the business side of the army. When the army chiefs looked over the lists, Bliss, who had shown his adaptability to any task, seemed the best fitted for the collectorship of customs in Cuba, with its thankless and harassing detail. This became the turning point of his career.

He must proceed immediately to his post; and he was thus precluded from spending Christmas with his family.

¹ To Mrs. Bliss October 29, 1898.

VII

CLEANING THE AUGEAN STABLES

THE custom house had been the center of corruption; and Bliss was also told, as he wrote to General Schofield, that it was the center of the yellow fever zone, and that he had a little chance of his life if he went to his office before ten in the morning and left after sunset. Inclusive of the two hours out for luncheon, this comprised the former Spanish collector's working day, when he did not abridge it by departing at four, or when his noon siesta had been so prolonged that he concluded it would not be worth while to return to his office that afternoon. In the early period of Bliss' tenure he arrived at six in the morning and often remained at his desk until midnight.

He had to deal with "the root of all evil" where it was deeply imbedded in the muck of centuries; to collect the money for reconstruction in a devastated land. In a large measure he had become responsible for the financial probity of our occupation, at a time when Spanish war scandals were having their airing at home and that kindly, elderly Secretary of War, Russell A. Alger, had become the scapegoat of the mismanagement out of which military victory had been fortuitously won by the guns of the navy and the charge up San Juan Hill. It was not enough for Bliss to be honest. He must have a hawk's eye and a hound's scent.

When he took charge, January 1, 1899, "the outgoing Spanish officials had taken the hat racks and most of the other office furniture, but they had been good enough to leave the chairs and the desks." ¹

If grievously hampered for quality, he need not lack for assistance in quantity. There were many Americans who were conscious of the gratitude Cuba owed them for her freedom and thought they would make excellent collectors and appraisers, although they did not speak Spanish and had no experience in customs work. We had told the Cubans that we freed Cuba for the Cubans. They sought the places of the vanquished at the crib. They had heard that Bliss was an

¹ Havana correspondence, Washington *Evening Star*, January 7, 1899.

exception to the majority of American officers; he knew their language; he was *simpatico*. Hopefully the giant who had come to the custom house would be a congenial Father Christmas.

"I write this with a constant stream of people passing to and fro," he wrote on the fourth day he was in office, and General John R. Brooke, the Commanding General, had asked him also to take a hand in reorganizing the Cuban treasury.¹ He did not miss the lack of chairs in his office. He stood as he faced the rush of problems brought in from the wharves and the procession of job hunters, importers, customs brokers, American and Cuban go-betweens and insurrecto leaders who had turned politicians and wanted places for their followers.² They looked upward to his bald domed head sweeping down to his bushy eyebrows, the bristling moustache and the square jaw above the big neck and huge body. He would never pass for a handsome man, but there could be no doubt he was a powerful one.

When he stroked his mustache he had heard something really worth listening to and thinking about; when his upper lip twitched with a puckish smile he might look really *simpatico*, but in a remote and puzzling manner. For his appraisers and clerical working force he must depend upon the veterans who knew the complicated system of Spanish schedules and gradually replace them with Cubans who, hopefully, could be won back to something approaching the energy of the restless Spain of the conquest away from the traditions of the generations of procrastination and corruption which had greased the descent of Spanish power. When his lip was firm he was anything but sympathetic.

Whether his negative was in a single word as he turned to the next visitor, or he paused for an instructive explanation of the ethics of the new régime, depended upon how many times he had carefully read that lesson to the same person. As much as it is universally admired, he found it very difficult to make some callers understand the meaning of honesty as it was taught to him by his father. An administrator of the most complicated tariff schedules in the world could not afford to spend an hour as a teacher cramming an unresponsive pupil in the value of a practice which that pupil still

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, January 4, 1899.

² Major General William H. Hay to the author.

persisted in regarding as purely an ornamental theory for human conduct. After Bliss had failed in three or four repetitions, he would say:

"*Señor*, I've told you no, no. That's not the way we do things, and we're not going to change our policy. I don't see why a brave insurrecto like you who fought to free his country from such abuses should expect it."

If this "no" failed, he spoke a no in army language with all the energy of his two hundred pounds, which concluded the interview. The classicist was using dynamite, spade, shovel, broom and hose in cleaning the Augean stables.

The custom house itself, which had been the old convent of San Francisco, was a reminder of that old Spain and of the Spain of the nineteenth century.

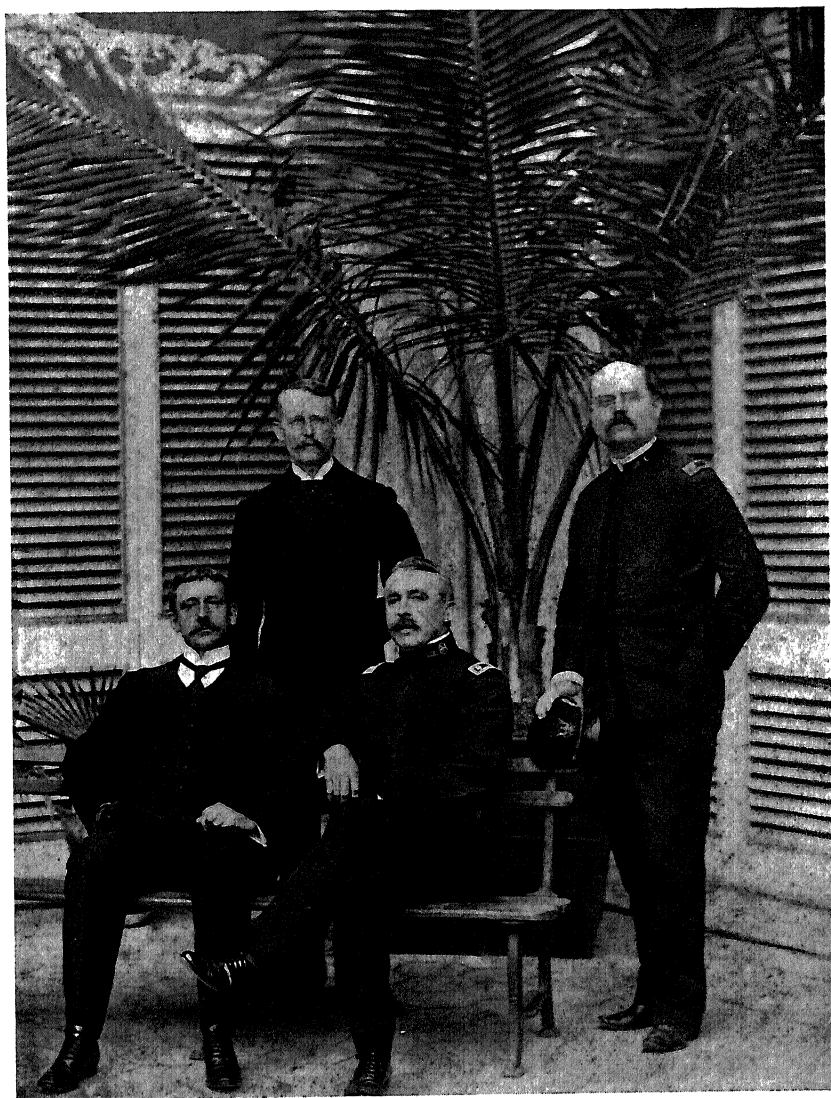
"To the right and the left is the front gallery of the two cloisters, not in a straight line, but broken at about the main entrance. On the right is the entrance door of the chapel. This in its time must have been a beautiful room, and there is still left the handsome timber roof. . . . There still remains a painting representing Saint Francis in paradise. It is now my appraising room. . . .

"When I took charge the warehouse, the church, chapel and front corridor were covered with a heavy timber floor which was all rotten and the resting place for disease germs. The archways had been filled in so that the corridors were dark as a cellar, damp, slimy, covered with green mold. The patios were thus nothing but great chimneys into which every kind of filth was thrown, and in an indescribably nasty condition. Through the building in various directions ran open sewers and drains covered by the rotten floors. Even in winter the stench was unendurable.¹

Yet this olfactory offense did not dull his historical sense which had its turn in the same letter.

"I never enter these old corridors without thinking of the time when they were peopled by men gowned and cowed, looking wistfully out at the sky-like sea through the cloister windows and up through the cloister arches at the sea-like sky, one seeing in that sea the far off blue and purple waves that lap the rocky coast of Tarragona, another thinking of the sky over the gardens of Valencia, and yet another hearing in the

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, July 17, 1899.



THE FIRST CUBAN OCCUPATION

	Mr. Frye	Bliss
	Sup't of Public Instruction	Collector of Customs
Elihu Root	Leonard Wood	
Secretary of War	Governor General	

noonday droning of tropical insects the bleating of sheep on the parched plains of old Castile."

The government allowed Bliss \$65,000 for repairs and sanitation. He hastened the work while he had reports that all his assistants but one planned to desert him before bad weather came.¹ By April he could report real progress. "I want to get everything running so smoothly that I can ask for a leave of absence to come home. There was no truth in the statement in the newspapers that I wanted to leave Cuba. I do not like it but I shall not desert my work."²

By July he could feel that he was really working in clean quarters. The rotten timber flooring had been replaced by solid concrete and Sicilian rock asphalt. He had made toilet rooms "the like of which had never been seen in Cuba," and taken out the fillers of the arches and restored the old cloisters.

"Now the hot sun at one hour or another during the day searches out every corner. When a tropical thunderstorm pours down in a flood, the asphalt pavements of the patios, which all slope toward the center connected with the water drains which have been made separate from the sewers, carry off the water as fast as it falls, and in a few minutes after the storm everything is dry."³

In the course of the excavations fragments of skeletons had been unearthed, and in each instance Bliss had said he should be informed so they could be interred in the ground where they were found.

"One afternoon a little after four o'clock, a messenger brought me a note from the Spanish Consul, the Marqués de Arguelles, asking if I would stop the work in the church long enough to permit the removal of the bones of Velasco! I was dumbfounded. No discovery had been reported to me. But I knew that there was very little that was sacred to the Chicago plumbers who were doing the work. I don't think they would have bothered themselves much if they had found the bones of Columbus.

"And who was Velasco? Then it all flashed in my mind. While I was in Spain I had read myself to sleep one cold winter's night with a book about Velasco, the officer who had made a gallant defense of the Morro Castle against the English in 1762, and how Charles III had ordered that there never should be a time when there should not be a ship in the

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, February 5, 1899.

² To Mrs. Bliss, April 15, 1899.

³ To Mrs. Bliss, July 13, 1899.

Spanish navy named after Velasco. And I remembered that on the morning of May 1 last year, the day after I had sailed out of Havre on my way home from Spain, Dewey had sunk the last vessel bearing that name in Manila Bay!"¹

Tradition had it that Velasco had died of his wounds at the Morro and had been buried in the church of San Francisco. One of the workmen had dropped his pick and hurried to the Spanish Consul with the news of the conclusion he had jumped to. The other workmen had not been interested in a fresh find of bones and said nothing about them to that fussy Colonel Bliss who insisted that all bones exhumed must be preserved and reverently interred. Yes, the workers said, the bones had been in a tomb, and they did not know what had become of them; there were not enough to fill a cigar box. Bliss found the stone slab over the tomb. On this he was able to trace the letters NTO and a vague outline of an unidentifiable coat of arms. Eventually he located the bones, and had them guarded and sealed in a box.

Meanwhile the news had traveled so fast that a crowd was gathering. The local newspapers had a sensation, too. Their reporters wanted to see the bones. Reports that the Americans had been opening tombs and tossing bones away as refuse were now confirmed. The Cuban police insisted upon an investigation to learn how "the man came by his death." They wanted possession of the bones, but Bliss refused this, being convinced that they would be turned over to a dealer for sale to relic hunters; for the Cubans generally had none of the respect of the Spanish Consul for the hero of the tyrant race.

If the Cubans desecrated the bones, "then all Spain would be convinced they were Velasco's, and the feeling would be bitter." Bliss sent for the Consul, "thinking it would be a graceful act to let him take possession and conduct an investigation to determine the genuineness of the relics." But by the time the Consul appeared Bliss had to change his mind, the controversy had become so acute and so fraught with political consequences.

Negotiations continued, with public interest unabated when a note came from a Cuban judge directing Bliss to turn over the bones to two physicians sent by the court. Bliss refused to comply. The Judge indignantly replied that:

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, July 7, 1899.

"I had violated a section of the Penal Code and was liable to some terrible punishment. So I told the Judge that if he would send his medical gentlemen to me at a given hour (they had already appeared several times and been turned away) I would have the Spanish Consul also there and they could make an examination together.

"So, after poor Velasco, or whoever he was, had been locked up for six weeks in the bondroom, the consul and the doctors appeared. I told them I was glad they had come, for the resurrection day was approaching, and the first thing they knew they would find Velasco walking out of the bondroom as they walked in. The fact was that I had become irritated at the senseless delay and the endless palavering. The doctors looked grave at my irreverence, but the Spanish Consul laughed."

One might wonder if the valiant and strenuous Velasco, could he have looked down from on high, might not have laughed, too, at the scene, but he might have been as capable as Bliss was of showing his irritation when he saw that a man from the English colonies in the chilly north ruled the Havana customs house.

"Together we went into the bondroom, a windowless cell which opens off from the chapel. The storekeeper solemnly unlocked the huge iron grated gates and ushered us in with a dimly burning candle. . . . The storekeeper held the box, the attendants held aloft the dim candle. The Spanish Consul stood a little apart while the two old doctors, very solemn of visage, peered through their spectacles, with their heads close together over the box. Then one of them slowly took out a little fragment, not more than an inch long, turned his eyes toward me and glancing over his spectacles with his head still bent over the box, solemnly tapped his skull to indicate that the fragment he held in his hand was a piece of a cranium. Then the other, with equal deliberation, took out another piece and in the same attitude and manner tapped his cheek to show that what he held was a piece of a jaw. And so they went through the poor anatomy in a way that no serio-comedy could do justice to.

"Then they got down on hands and knees and examined the piece of the tombstone, one of them unbending from his solemnity to utter an impatient 'Carrambal' when the attendant singed his nose and beard with the candle.

"When it was all through I made them seal up the box again, and we filed solemnly out into the dim chapel, where nineteenth century appraisers were quarreling over merchandise. They looked gravely at each other for two or three minutes, and then slightly tipping my hat, I inquired if there were anything further. They said 'Nothing more.' I escorted them to the door where they said that, on making their report, the judge would probably write me a letter informing me that there

was no evidence of crime with the taking off the deceased, and that I could deliver the remains to the Spanish Consul.”¹

It all made a story of the kind that Bliss liked to tell and he wrote on in the enjoyment of it in a letter to Mrs. Bliss of eight closely written foolscap pages which he had begun with “It is a hot, sultry, damp night, and I cannot sleep.” Two days later he wrote that he had his first attack of malaria. “It is not much . . . I want to stick to my work until the end of summer.” Then he hoped to come home for a month.

He had no time to refresh his Greek, his regular duties kept him completely occupied. His outside reading was about articles which were dutiable. Petitioners and protesters found that he had knowledge of everything from shoestrings to silk pyjamas, from razors to sewing machines and sugar mill machinery. This study could be made just as interesting as taking up another language.

Petitioners asked him to make a more liberal ruling in a present instance; protesters asked relief from a harsh past ruling. The Spartan answer was that the law was on the books to be obeyed; he could not change it.

“It is difficult to express the absolute contempt for law in this communication,” he wrote on one occasion; and again, “the custom house cannot act as a guardian of the public and at the same time as the guardian of the interests of the express company.” In his defense of J. J. Rafferty as deputy collector, “who bore the entire brunt of the efforts by the brokers to secure favorable action to their interests and consequently unfavorable to the government,” he added, “you cannot make friends with a customs broker.”²

He set a personal example himself to prove that profligacy was not in order in the collection of funds to restore a stricken land to prosperity.

“Sometime ago the War Department issued a confidential order giving three officers in Cuba, of whom I was one, extra pay to be paid out of the customs revenues of Cuba. I declined mine on the ground that I was not inclined to accept extra pay merely because I was doing unusual work. The amount was \$3,500. a year. But I said that there were certain unusual expenses incident to my position and they ought to be paid. . . .

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, July 7, 1899.

² Memorandum in the Bliss papers.

On March 25 came another paper making me an allowance of \$1,800. a year for extraordinary expenses. After thinking this over a long time" [three weeks in fact] "I have decided to accept it."¹

He stopped the pleasant custom which prevailed in other departments by allowing no customs boats to be used for personal junkets. It was not for the government to provide holiday transportation for its servants. He became logically tart when others wanted to take his boats for a department that spent money, when his boats, he declared, were needed for official business by the force that collected money. American officials and army officers found him relentless about favors on anything dutiable they brought into the country. He was convinced that he was gradually gathering the nucleus of a trustworthy force, including Cubans who had seen the light. He had a stalwart deputy in Rafferty, and a tower of strength in Major William H. Hay as a second who reflected the mind of his chief in organizing other ports.

A round faced young War Department stenographer had ideas which soon lifted him out of the routine of taking down Bliss' dictation. W. Morgan Shuster knew Spanish, too. He brought a plan of accounting to Bliss by which the baffling Spanish system could be made intelligible to the American mind.

"You're caught," said Bliss, after examining it. "I make you chief of statistics."²

One day a loyal Cuban clerk came to Shuster saying it was very embarrassing, but he knew the chief wanted everybody to be honest, and something was going on which the chief ought to know. He said that a group of young Cubans, who belonged to well-to-do first families and had taken clerkships in the custom house at low pay for what appeared as patriotism's sake in aiding Bliss to promote an honest administration, were receiving bribes for passing fine cigarette paper, of which large quantities were used in Cuba, as wrapping paper, which paid a relatively infinitesimal duty.³

The secret service man of our Treasury Department refused to believe the charge, at first. It was incredible that men of such standing could stoop so low. But the clerk was circumstantial, the records

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, April 15, 1899.

² Shuster to the author. (Later, Shuster became Deputy Collector.)

³ Shuster to the author.

seemed to confirm his statements. Shuster undertook a part in an old method to get further proof. He approached the suspects in amiable confidence, intimating that he was aware of their game, and inquiring if the price of his silence was not worth their consideration. They agreed that it was, to the amount of a thousand dollars a month, while the secret service man jotted down the evidence behind a door.¹

When Bliss had this the thunderous wrath of all the gods broke on high Olympus. Money for which he was responsible had been stolen under his administration. He had met these men at functions and heard their phrases of patriotic idealism. There was no room in his philosophy for such foul deceit and deliberate theft by men who ought to know better. He would brook no alternative advice and counsel. He sent for a squad of soldiers and marched the convicted ones off to jail; and then began a hunt for other malefactors. His faith in human nature had been momentarily cut from under him. He was never in a more unforgiving mood, never so inclined to condemn a people as a whole.

"You have no idea of the commotion that has been stirred up . . . I had already dismissed 150 men . . . I did not send any of these men before the court because I could not trust the court. . . . The courts are rotten with corruption. . . . Nothing would have any effect except public disgrace. So when I discovered the infamous cabal I determined to strike hard. . . .

"Another arrest will be made today which will cause a sensation. It makes me sick in body, mind and heart. I have tried so hard to get honest men. But it makes no difference; as soon as a man who may have been honest until he is appointed to an office he thinks it perfectly right to steal. This is no exaggeration, but the literal truth; not a man, Cuban or Spaniard, but thinks it perfectly legitimate to rob the government and to commit forgery and felony in doing it."²

Three days later he wrote:

"People here are without any moral sense. They knew I had dismissed scores of men for crime. But the crime did not disgrace them, nor had I publicly disgraced them by sending them to jail. They believed and still believe that a man has a perfect right to cheat and steal. They almost admit that the collector has a right to dismiss him if he catches him. But

¹ Shuster to the author.

² To Mrs. Bliss, January 6, 1900.

to disgrace him,—No! And so when I had these men arrested the whole town was up.”¹

This collector of customs, who had appeared at first as a cultivated and traveled gentleman, had turned out to be a bully wholly inconsiderate of his class. The carriages of the rich and influential rolled up to the Governor General's palace, and then on to the jail to sympathize with the poor wronged victims—members of Cuba's best families actually put in jail as common thieves. Undeniably, Bliss' action had been somewhat embarrassing to friendly relations with powerful private and social interests. But he replied that he would make an example of men who were not entitled to as much consideration as a common sneak thief. It was no use to argue with a mountain when a little prospecting showed that its stubbornness was set in an all round rock base.

By this time the honest and able among our representatives in Cuba felt the support of the firm and knowing touch of Elihu Root, who had succeeded Alger as Secretary of War. Another great chief had learned that he could depend upon Bliss. Root assessed the protests of American and Cuban interests against Bliss' régime at their true value and saw the motives behind the intrigues to displace him.

Bliss had given up his leave on the discovery of the thefts. He would not run the risk that absence from duty might leave further thefts undetected. He was an exile from home and family in Spartan mood. Mrs. Bliss remained at home with her little son Goring and her old and ill father who could not bear to part with her.

Spanish tradition made it very undignified for a chief collector to go sweating about the wharves, summoning appraisers to learn what valuation had been placed on certain lots of merchandise, but in this way he learned that he had not yet conquered corruption. Solid brass beds were being undervalued as being iron coated with brass.

In one of his nightly inspections he found that the chief of the night force was absent with a member of the harbor police. He ordered a list of assignments for night duty to be placed on his own desk every afternoon with the warning that any one found absent, unless in pursuit of a criminal, would be dismissed.² Dismissal for dereliction by those who had had time to learn better was one of the

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, January 9, 1900.

² Executive order, June 1, 1900.

cardinal points of his system in that duty he took so very seriously of impressing American ethics upon the Cubans.

Meanwhile rumors spread about our conduct of the Post Office which was more shameful for us in Cuba, where we had committed ourselves to set a good example, than at home. In the summer of 1900 the scandal broke in the revelation of an embezzlement of \$130,000 from Cuban postal funds under Director General of Posts, Estes G. Rathbone, a time-serving politician. If Rathbone and his assistants did as well as this out of the posts they could have made a bonanza out of the customs, which might have proved them more greedy than Spanish officials.

Cubans had a lesson in comparisons of two American types and their ways of living. "As honest as Bliss of the customs"¹ had its partisans. "Collector Bliss lives quietly in a single room at the Hotel Telegrapho, going to and returning from his office in a hired vehicle of the most ordinary description."²

The industrious plowman continued on his straight furrow, mindless of what the magpies were saying. His colleagues had a little joke on him over an incident which revealed his unfamiliarity with a most notorious scandal sheet of the time which was the bane of people high in official or social life.

"The other day a woman of the bleached blonde type came to my office. I did not see her, being excessively busy. She wanted to be present at the examination of an express package of valuable jewels that she said were coming from New York. Of course that was her right and I sent my principal secretary with her to the officer in charge of the appraiser's division. It seems that she there demanded some privilege which could not be granted. So, threatening dire vengeance, she wafted herself off to General Wood, the Governor General. He did not see her, but sent her back to me.

"This time, not being very busy, I saw her. She demanded a written permit from me allowing her to bring in anything, not only without paying duty but without being inspected. This I declined to do, telling her that I had several people in jail for doing that very thing.

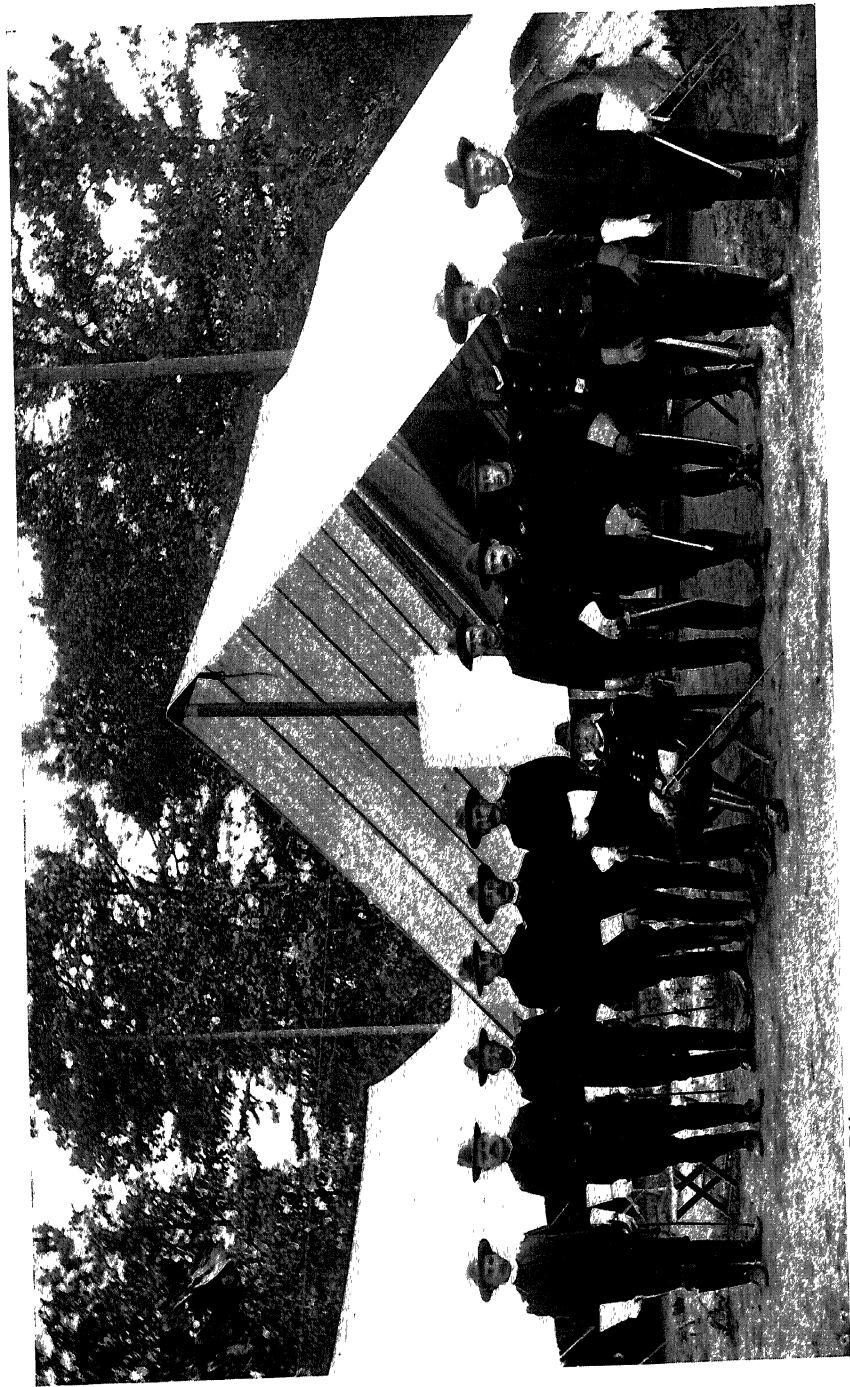
"Don't you know me?' she asked.

"No, Madam,' I said. 'I have never seen or heard of you before.'

"Well,' she said, 'I was never treated so rudely in my life. I'll give you a roasting that will drive you out of here.' And so forth, and so forth.

¹ Havana *Journal*, May 4, 1900.

² Havana correspondence of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, May 29, 1900.



Bliss

GENERAL WILSON'S STAFF AT CAMP THOMAS, 1898

"When the office closed I went over to Headquarters and told the story. They all laughed and asked me if I didn't know who she was. I did not, although it seems she has made herself pretty well known in Havana during the few days she has been here. But as my time is all taken up with work I have no time for gossip.

"They said, 'Don't you know the Widow?'

" 'No. Who is the Widow?'

"Then they told me that her name is Dean and that she writes in *Town Topics* over the *nom de plume* of 'The Widow.'

"The next day a newspaper man told me that he and some of his colleagues had dinner with her. She tried to get them to combine and give me a roasting in the New York papers. But they told her it would not be a wise thing for her to do. I should think it laughable were it not that constant fighting against every kind of corruption has worn out my temper." ¹

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, January 14, 1900.

VIII

HIS FIRST STAR

THE doorman knew the routine in response to the exactions of tropic heat when Bliss arrived at his Havana office in the morning. No matter how late he had sat up the previous evening he came in under full sail with his quick steps which bore his weight so easily. After he tossed his hat to the doorman and wiped his perspiring brow the doorman knew what was coming next. It was a call for lemons and a siphon. Bliss would pour down the glassful and then call for another glass. At length he concluded that this unnecessarily delayed the public business and the satisfaction of his tropic thirst.

Why not a single glass of adequate size? A search through the shops brought in one that medieval barons would have found large enough for their mead. It, too, was empty when Bliss set it down. Considering the straight line of Bliss' waistband, in spite of his size, this remained an amazing feat which never lost its wonder to the little doorman, when in fact it was no more remarkable in relation to capacity than if he himself had swallowed a regulation glassful at a single draught.¹

All subordinates and all petitioners learned by lessons in practice, which were edged with sharp words, clarified by analysis or softened by the comprehensive philosopher's smile, that however late he had worked or talked, however brief had been his sleep in the punishing climate of midsummer in Cuba, his mind took off at full speed on all twelve cylinders after he had drunk the lemonade, his eyesight clear for jokers in documents or rats in holes.

It was in Cuba that we first hear of him taking his home habit of thinking out loud to his office, as he paced back and forth threshing out a problem, necessarily not for immediate decision but one which had appeared in the offing and which he would be prepared to solve through being fortified with all round information and understanding, should it not be disposed of by events. He rehearsed the Cuban

¹ W. Morgan Shuster to the author.

view, the American view, and looked on both from the windows of the War Department.

His momentary bursts of pessimism did not prevent him from eventually developing an honest force. The men whom he inducted into the permanent service had the feeling of knights under a robustious preceptor who personified his own teachings. His influence endured in Cuba in a branch of government which normally would have been the first to feel the pull of politics. "I served under Bliss" became a proud memory, "It was not done under Bliss" armor against temptation to theft. This spirit of corps became so deeply rooted that it singularly resisted the growth of corruption under succeeding Cuban dictatorships.¹

At the end of his second year in Cuba Bliss became a member of the Maestranza mess of the officers of Governor General Leonard Wood's staff. Life was never dull for them for want of employment or irritations. They were training and forming a Cuban army and police force, nursing the provisional civil government, arranging for popular elections and sanitating cities, and beginning the scientific study of yellow fever.

At the head of the table sat Colonel Hugh L. Scott, the classmate of Bliss, who now ranked him. Scott had had enough frontier experience to round out the professional career of a half dozen officers, if it had been apportioned among them. To him Indians were not only people, but the people close to his heart. For five years he had commanded a cavalry troop of Comanche and Apache Indians attached to our army; for three years he had been in charge of Geronimo's Chiricahua Apaches; and he had investigated the famous ghost dances. The ancient and modern languages which interested him were combined in the Indian sign language in which he was an unrivaled expert. He had had a happy detail in writing a definitive monograph on his favorite subject for the Smithsonian Institution.

Listening to the lore of Bliss and Scott, when the talk turned from shop, was a young cavalryman and polo player, Lieutenant Frank R. McCoy, Wood's aide, close friend and adviser. McCoy was to have a thrilling record as a regimental commander in France, to serve in a civil rôle in the Philippines, to direct the Nicaragua elec-

¹ The author's visit to the Havana Custom House, September, 1933.

tions, and represent his country on the League of Nations Commission for the investigation of the Far Eastern situation, in the course of his services as a genius of a handy man on the army lists to whom any national administration might turn with "McCoy's the man for that."

In later years he always liked to go to Bliss for advice on an international problem. The last time was after McCoy had been named Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry and Conciliation in the Bolivia-Paraguay dispute, just before Bliss' death, Bliss being "very feeble physically, his mind as strong and clear as ever." ¹

McCoy wrote of the days of the Maestranza mess:

"After every round of talk by Bliss however lightly tossed off, and however keen your sense of enjoyment of his point, there was the added feeling, at least on the part of the young cavalryman at the table, as though he had been sitting at the feet of a philosopher as well.

"On one night that I still remember, Bliss with his gift for vivid description and his power of pointing a moral unobtrusively by an engaging tale, was responsible for a graceful gesture on the part of our government and for late justice being done to the family of a Spanish admiral. He had brought to the mess the recently arrived Spanish consul-general. The latter was very *simpatico*, and sat long with us, but even so, after his departure we remained at the table and talked about his charm and easy nicking-in to our interest—so much so that I brought up the subject which had been taboo during the stay in Cuba of the former Spanish representative." ²

It was supposed that Admiral Villamil had gone down with his ship which had been sunk by a shell from the battleship *Iowa* in the naval battle of Santiago. But it happened that just before the final big shell struck his ship his sailors had lashed Villamil, who was badly wounded, in a deck chair, put him ashore in a small boat, and left him in a cave just above the surf line where he could not be seen by Cuban troops ashore.

"Some months later, General Wood heard about the admiral still sitting there and made a search and found him, quite undisturbed, still wearing his uniform and insignia of rank. He was taken to Santiago. General Wood informed the Spanish consul-general and offered to turn

¹ Major General Frank R. McCoy to the author.

² General McCoy in a letter to the author.

him over to Spain. The consul-general showed no interest, stated that the admiral had gone down with his ship, and so General Wood had him placed in a casket and in the arsenal at Santiago, where he remained for most of the next four years, carried by the ordnance officer in charge of the arsenal as 'one Spanish admiral dead,' and was transferred for that period from one officer to another as though he were any other piece of government property.

"When Bliss made the suggestion to us at the mess we agreed that some Spanish family should have their admiral back. So, the next day, the inevitable record was gotten out of the files giving the official account of 'one Spanish admiral dead,' and General Wood sent for the consul-general, who was greatly excited and touched and exclaimed, 'I was a classmate of Villamil and know his family and shall take it up with my government at once.'

"Shortly diplomatic representations were made to Secretary of State John Hay in Washington and General Wood was directed to turn over the body of Admiral Villamil to a Spanish admiral sent to Havana for the purpose. The Admiral was buried with due form and ceremony in Madrid; his forgotten widow was pensioned by the Spanish government and his son ennobled."

McCoy, who was charged with the initial ceremony in Havana, knew how to make it agreeable to Spanish sensibilities.

After Bliss had the organization of the custom house in hand he had more leisure for mess talk, for study, and for his delight of dining with chosen companions in a little Spanish restaurant on the water front where the food and wine were cheap and good. There he heard from the proprietor a story about the destruction of the battleship *Maine* which he never failed to mention in his reminiscences of Cuba. He would go into a story teller's dramatic detail about it, picturing the proprietor half drowsing at his desk on a dull evening, while three diners at the same table seemed to have little to say, their thought attuned in suspense.

Above the clatter of falling glass after a tremendous explosion shook the building, the proprietor heard the exclamation "that's the *Maine*!" from one of the men as they rushed into the street. Bliss always regretted that he could not have been present and have followed the three men, thus confirming his suspicion that they were in a plot, and thereby his view from the start that the Spanish government had been in no way party to the destruction of the

Maine, but it had been the work of insurrectos who hoped that it would arouse public indignation in the United States which would force us into war with Spain to free Cuba.

In spite of our predilection for soldiers in character playing adventurous parts, it has been found worth while dwelling on Bliss' detail for two and a half years as master and arbiter of the Cuban wharves, when again predestination had taken him in charge for a most important link in the chain of preparation for his future. He was continuing his education at forty-seven, as he was to continue it until the day of his death.

The threads of commerce had run through fingers sensitive to each one in the weaving of their complex network. He had learned how the goods which make up the world's traffic from ships' holds to local delivery wagons are produced and sold, how honest creative commercial enterprise is under the continuous sniping by the crooked and parasitic, and how racial jealousies and character in the struggle for livelihood and profits are reflected in competition for world markets. He had gained invaluable practical knowledge to serve him in high place in the day of madly spurred production of all the articles which were needed to feed the maws of the mightiest war of all history; the day when sound judgment between the difference of promise and fulfillment of production, between patriotic zeal and actual efficiency, might decide the fate of battles; the day when the propitiation of the jealousies of Allies in the fluctuations of their prolonged mortal struggle became vital to secure the pooling of supplies as well as the unity of command to prevent common disaster.

Even the alertness he developed against the cunning and daring of smugglers—this had the thrill of a detective story in the life for him—had its value in preparing him to sweep away the concealing fog and dig under the tinsel carpeted muck of World War propaganda for the truth by which to guide policy on the straight road to the goal.

In the closing months of his customs work Bliss came nearer to being discovered by the nation at large than at any time in his career. The soldier out of a soldier's rôle in a civil task became almost a public hero in his victory over an enemy whose arms were not shot

and steel. His administration held up a mirror in which our public saw our national character in the agreeable image of the ideals which had been inscribed on our banners as we made war to free Cuba.

Few stopped to think whether he was an officer of regulars or volunteers, a West Pointer or a National Guardsman. The philosopher, the student of the classics, military science and history was seen as a square-jawed business type, a terror of evil doers. If he had had the art of publicity he would have had real fame. But publicity was so alien to his nature that his natural adherence to the rule that army officers must not talk for publication meant that he never fed the reporters with items about himself. The man who loved talk in free play around a table was generally regarded as taciturn.

But what effect would his detail to the customs have upon his professional future? What could he look forward to in the army when he stepped back into its routine? If he chose to leave the army, the reputation he had won assured him a high salary in the business world. No such offer interested him. Thinking in the terms of the whole, trained to serve the whole, as his personal destiny, it was not in his nature to become the servant of a private interest. If army pay were not high, this, too, was what he had bargained for the day he entered West Point. The main appeal of more money would have been to enable him and Mrs. Bliss to buy more books instead of having to go to the library so often. They would have left their path scattered with books they did not consider worth retaining while those that they did accumulated. They would have been the booksellers' delight.

His associates were given to saying from the days of his youth until his retirement that he kept his light under a bushel. As he expressed it about his customs detail, "I am in a barrel."¹ Upon the outbreak of the Philippine rebellion, and again when we dispatched troops against the Boxers for the relief of the besieged foreign legations in Peking, he let it be known that field service would be welcome to him. But never had superiors been so set against any suggestion of detaching him from the work he had in hand. As a reward for his services in Cuba he had been made a brigadier general of volunteers, April 25, 1901.

¹ Letter to Lieutenant General John M. Schofield, June 10, 1901.

In the course of the expansion of the regular army after the Spanish War his classmates of the line now outranked him in the regulars; and rank is the symbol of standing on the regular list. After his volunteer commission expired, he faced the prospect of remaining a commissary major long after some of them were colonels or even brigadiers. At best, in routine advancement he might not have his star for thirteen years.

The blade of Secretary Root's logic, cutting away the adipose to the skeleton of essentials, had revealed the basic error of our army organization which had been responsible for the confusion of the Spanish War. Against powerful opposition in and out of the army he asked Congress to establish a general staff which, at least by studies, would learn how to direct, feed and munition large bodies of troops in the event of a future war. General Miles threw the weight of his prestige against a plan which would curtail his importance as commanding general, but the venerable General Schofield, with his greater prestige, was brought to Washington by Root and appeared before the Congressional committee in favor of the reform which he had not hesitated to advocate when he was himself commanding general.

If we had not had a small body of officers, who had had at least theoretical training in how to think in the terms of the whole, imagination can hardly exaggerate the plight when we applied the old system—or rather lack of system, which had broken down in landing twenty thousand men in Cuba—to the gigantic enterprise of supplying and training an army of nearly four millions of men and dispatching two millions to France. Bliss' studies and experience had made him a strong partisan of a general staff. Of course his conviction was unaffected by the fact that the merging of the commissary and quartermaster branches in the reform of the antiquated bureau system would further delay his promotion.

Secretary Root, after having taken counsel of the elders in working out as progressive a staff plan as the Congress would accept, picked for its leading personnel promising young men in the forties who would have time to learn the duties of high command before their retirement or before age had dimmed their receptivity for new ideas. He had Bliss in mind as one of the chosen group.

Under the law the President might propose any officer for a brigadiership but no other promotion, except through a special act of Congress, of an officer for a higher rank below the rank of brigadier. Leonard Wood and Frederick Funston had won their laurels in the field, but there had been bitterness in the army and public resentment over their promotion to be brigadiers. It seemed inevitable that there would be far greater commotion if a commissary major were thus elevated over the heads of many for his services as customs collector when he had not been in the charge up San Juan Hill and never fought Indians.

When any officer's promotion is being considered the Secretary of War sends for his record from the files. Bliss' revealed his prodigious industry and faithfulness to duty; he had put in his leaves in the study of some professional subject. He had a tribute from every chief under whom he had ever served, and Schofield repeated his in a letter which made it appear that Bliss' promotion to be a brigadier was no less than a national duty. But most important of all for present purposes was the view of Bliss' present chief. As Secretary Root afterward expressed it with characteristic and telling brevity, "Bliss was a great comfort to me."¹ In days of trial for a high executive, the while he brought an army out of chaos and formulated the policy for the government of the lands we had taken from Spain, this is a perfect tribute to a subordinate who had passed on no embarrassments to his superiors from a caldron of trouble which might have easily boiled over frequently into the official channels to Washington.

When Bliss' name was sent into the Senate there was little public criticism. The respect for his mental powers, his professional ethics and his success in every detail he had had, took the edge off the professional antagonism of the regulars. This time West Pointers saw a West Pointer being honored, not Wood the doctor, not Funston, the captor of Aguinaldo, who had never been even a lieutenant of regulars. Senators had heard Bliss' answers as a witness in their hearings on the Cuban situation. They recognized him as an expert upon whose knowledge they must largely depend in shaping our future economic relations with Cuba. The Senate confirmed his nomination; he had his star.

¹ Elihu Root to the author.

Soon he was acting in relation to a new chief, Secretary of State John Hay, in negotiating the reciprocity treaty with Cuba. This added another link to the chain of his experience, that of the diplomat between American and Cuban political and economic pressure in which our home sugar growers must allow Cuban sugar preferential access to our markets if her canefields were not to go to waste. In the bargaining for differential to pay for differential he had to deal with the demand for a market for American linens and hundreds of other American products which the Cubans might be able to buy cheaper abroad. Business men accepted his judgments as honest; Cubans, in their sensitiveness to American domination, would yield to him where they would to no other American.

There were practically no changes made in his final draft of the Treaty. This job finished, he had tribute from another chief, from Hay, and from President McKinley and President Palma of Cuba. The philosopher and handy man might have been spoiled by the praise of his superiors if he had had the time.

Reporting back to Secretary Root, without a holiday, he was assigned to aid in the organization of the new General Staff system and its advanced schools, particularly the new War College of which he was to be the first president and to father in its character and curriculum.

His conception of the plan, profound in its knowledge of history and military science, recognized that the fault of our system had been in the lack of advanced training for the graduate of West Point or the young man who won his commission from the ranks or civil life.

"Even the youngest officer must know something more than drill, army regulations and the Articles of War. This additional knowledge the officer could acquire for himself if he would, but it was noticed that there was a tendency for officers, whether from West Point or elsewhere, to lose gradually and not slowly the habit of study—except as connected with the simple routine of their work—and with it not only to fail to acquire the daily increasing knowledge to keep them abreast of their profession, but actually to lose much of what they had already learned. In short it was a case of steady decadence culminating in complete dry rot.

"The only remedy is to surround the officer in his daily life and throughout his life with atmosphere which he must breathe into his mental and moral being, whether he will or no, and which shall be a never relaxing

stimulus to continued endeavor. The fact that an officer was qualified yesterday does not mean that he is qualified today.

"And it does not require much to provide this atmosphere. It does not require an advanced curriculum for study. The first and main thing is to keep everybody at work all the time. When the annual leave of absence comes, it should not be a mere change of scene, but a well earned rest from eight hours' work a day for eleven months."¹

His two years detail as President of the War College was a grand period for him. He had a home in Washington, family life again and access to the Congressional Library for taking a street car when the day's work was over. Daughter Eleanor, now at Bryn Mawr, was majoring in geology. It behooved father to study geology himself in order to hold up his end and retain her companionship of which he was so fond. He studied her chosen subject to such purpose that he was a trial to her knowledge at times.² Together they took long walks in which he might be silent for an hour, and then he would break into talk, as he revolved around some subject, or dug into the heart of it, or passed in random mood from one subject to another, or asked Eleanor more questions about geology as they continued their education together. When she received her doctorate he concluded, with the smiling twitch of the lip, that he had crammed enough to show her that he was not entirely ignorant of the rocks under the foot of man as well as his history.

With the conclusion of his term at the War College, his preparation for his future was practically complete except for the wisdom which was to come with age. He could not now enlarge it by fighting Indians. The Indians were permanently off the war path.

¹ Memorandum to Secretary of War, Elihu Root, on the plan for the War College, August 3, 1903.

² Mrs. Adolph Knopf to the author.

IX

RULING THE MOROS

"I AM on a little coast guard cutter sailing out of Manila Bay over the same route that Admiral Dewey sailed in by when he came to fight the Battle of Manila Bay,"¹ he wrote as he began his first inspection as commander of the Department of Luzon, which was his next detail after he completed his term as President of the War College.

But he was not yet through telling Mrs. Bliss, his son and daughter about the few days he had in Japan, to which he reverted for weeks to come in his letters home. He had traveled with the famous Taft party. Its members, official and unofficial, under the wing of Secretary of War William H. Taft, were guests of the Japanese government at the Shiba Palace. They were the recipients of most elaborate official hospitality and the cheers of the people at the time when America promised to be the great and good friend who would assure the Japanese most advantageous terms at the coming Portsmouth Peace Conference as the reward of their valor on the fields of Manchuria in their war with Russia.

One wonders how the most faithful of reporters could have observed as much as Bliss in so short a time, and if all the other members of the party together got so complete an impression. The fact that he had been studying Japanese history and customs on the long voyage across the Pacific did not dim the freshness of his discovering eye in his discriminate pictures of the scene which has ever held travelers in their first visit to Japan under its spell. His description of the presentation at the court of the rising nation was as detailed as that of the royal reception in Madrid of the court of the descending nation, with a historic appreciation of the coaching in court etiquette he received and the stately deliberation of the formalities by which the guests were advanced in stages of cumulative awe to the presence of the Emperor who was descended from the goddess of the sun.

¹ To his son, Goring Bliss, August 18, 1905.

"I bowed down until a long nose would have touched the knees!" He had been placed next in line to Taft and our Ambassador, Lloyd C. Griscom. The Emperor had asked him many questions. "You see I was the principal military man in the party and that's what counts in this part of the world."¹ His philosophy required the support of all his sense of humor when he doubled up his large frame into the small berth of a Japanese sleeping car.

Life in the Philippines as well as in Japan interested him.

"Here in the Philippines is a village I mean to visit where the transplanting of rice is done to the sound of music. The entire village turns out with the village band. At a certain tap of the drum each one bends over, and makes a hole with his thumb in the mud. At the next step they insert the stalk; at the third they put the mud about the roots; at the fourth they stand erect, look very much pleased with themselves and are ready to do it all over again."²

No special incident marked the routine of his eight months departmental military command in Luzon, 1905-06, under civil rule. It was established garrison duty with no new problems of administration.

But no servant of the nation could have had more complete sovereignty over a more primitively picturesque world than he had in his next detail of nearly three years as ruler of the Moro Province. He could not have been more remote from the seats of the mighty in Washington and the centers of western civilization. Knowledge of the Koran became more useful to him than of the Bible or the classics.

His isolation as ruler of the southern seas glowed in his memory as a kind of enchantment. It would make a book of a thousand tales in tune with the strange trick destiny played us when it included as our wards Mohammedan tribesmen who were farthest away of any of the Faithful from Mecca. From the sands of Arabia the Prophet's word had flamed across deserts, over mountain barriers, the length and breadth of India and through the jungles to the tip of the Malay peninsula, and then from island to island until it reached the western shore of Mindanao, the second largest of the Philippines, facing the Pacific. Spain came to Mindanao bearing

¹ To Miss Eleanor Bliss, October 27, 1905.

² To Miss Eleanor Bliss, August 13, 1905.

the cross, but there she found the religion of the crescent firmly implanted and could impress the religion of the cross only upon the natives of the northern islands.

The Christianized natives of the northern islands became susceptible to our indoctrination as a means to their independence, which they had failed to win by armed rebellion; but the aversion of the wild Moros to prompt education in the virtues of our republican system soon became apparent. Even among the Malays and Mohammedans the Moros were a law unto themselves. Spanish garrisons in the Philippines had had almost as frequent punitive wars to keep their hand in against the Moros as with the Riffs across the Straits of Gibraltar. They had really never extended stable authority beyond the coast line of Mindanao, with its dense jungles, their eternal moisture feeding its rivers and lakes—under the shadow of mountain ranges rising to a height of four thousand feet, with one extinct volcano of ten thousand.

Rule was patriarchal by the sultans and datus, who were in continual vendettas. Cattle stealing was so established an occupation that Moros used to keep their cattle in the house overnight. Burglary of everything transportable was justified by your having left some small article behind on a call. Therefore you were only taking your own. The first lesson our army had to inculcate was that the killing of an American soldier brought killing in return.

“The result of the first few years of American occupation, under a form of government—if it was a government—not adapted to the situation, was anarchy and chaos. On the very spot where you are standing, wanton and cruel murders were committed; here in the capital city, cholera and other epidemic diseases raged unchecked, property was insecure and business at a stand still. An historian of the time well described the situation as a ‘seething hell.’”¹

Bliss’ predecessor in the Moro Province, Major General Leonard Wood, who was now in supreme military command in the Philippines, had formed the Legislative Council. This substituted civil for martial law, imposed light taxes, created municipalities and municipal codes, boards of health, tribal wards and ward courts. Bliss’ rôle would be that of the peacemaker in the extension and development of the new system. He was military commander, civil

¹ From an address by Bliss opening the First Annual Zamboanga District Fair, 1907.

governor and chief of the Council. The Moros could not yet understand the division of authority in which a chief white datu, who was not a soldier, could be superior to another white datu who was a soldier. The soldier datu could hardly be a real fighting man if he submitted to this. Army authority was supplemented by the new native constabulary formed on the principle of that in the other islands, but with special adaptation to Moro needs.

The new governor must be pedagogue as well as lawgiver and policeman; for we made no exception of the Moros in our faith that the doorway to self-government was that of the little red school house, and learning their abc's the first step in the intelligence and character which would make them capable citizens of a future democracy patterned on our own.

His headquarters and capital were at Zamboanga on the southwestern peninsula tip of Mindanao across from the little Sulu archipelago which formed a partial bridge of islands to Borneo, and which was also in the Moro Province. Upon his arrival he found that the honeymoon of the new system was over; the datos had begun to resent reforms in their interest and also the taxes which paid for the reforms. They had their own codes and their own kind of judicial procedure.

"If a bachelor or widower commits adultery and is killed by a non-Mohammedan, the non-Mohammedan shall be put to death. But a Mohammedan who may kill such an adulterer shall not be put to death." "If a creditor begets a child of a slave held as security he shall buy the child from the debtor; otherwise the child shall become the slave of the debtor." "If a married man commits adultery with a free woman, both shall be stoned to death. The punishment of the man may be reduced to imprisonment. The woman shall be buried up to the chest and stoned with medium sized stones." "The minimum amount of blood money for a deep stab wound of a Moslem shall be eight hundred and sixty-eight and one-quarter pesos; of a heathen or pagan fifty-seven and one-quarter pesos." "If a free man kills a slave, the free man shall not be put to death. If a slave or other servant kills a free person he shall be put to death."¹

One of the first items of bad news—it took seven days to reach him

¹ The Mangindanao code of laws from *Studies in Moro History, Law, and Religion*. Saleeby. Department of the Interior Ethnological Survey Publications. Vol. IV, Part I, Manila, 1905.

—told of the murder of an American official by a Tazacado chieftain. The Davao district was restless. Major Boyd, the governor of the Cotobato district, had been ordered back to Manila. Bliss' classmate, Major Hugh L. Scott, whom Bliss now ranked in the regulars, and Captain Reeves, the Provincial Secretary of the Sulu District, had been recalled. This was a heavy handicap when the "Moros are in a state of savagery where they know a *man* but know or care nothing about a *government*." He could not understand this relief of important men just at a critical period. "Or rather I think I do understand it, and the reason is not pleasant to contemplate."¹

If the situation were not brought under control promptly the reforms would have a serious setback, and lives would be lost before order was restored.

"The authorities forget that the most critical time is after the slaughtering has stopped. Then is when we need here men of influence and power to get the people started in the right way, to get them to cultivate their fields, and to make them understand that peace is better for them than war."

He must move rapidly from one seat of disaffection to another. However, on the boat on the way to Jolo he softened his irritation over the troubles which had "all come at once when in this country of no telegraphs and roads it is very embarrassing when one wants to know what has happened at various times in various places."

"I am reminded of the story the Duke of Wellington used to tell about an Irish orderly he had and of whom he was very fond. The orderly used to get tipsy whenever he had a chance. Early one morning while the Duke was in his tent (it was during the Peninsular campaign) he heard his orderly outside trying to mount his horse. The orderly was a bit heavy and stupid from too much Spanish wine the night before and he fell back each time he tried to spring into the saddle. Finally he began to call on the saints. 'Holy Saint Peter, give us a boost!' (followed by an unsuccessful jump). 'Holy Saint Patrick, give me a lift!' (another unsuccessful jump). After exhausting the calendar of the saints, he gathered himself for a supreme effort, gave a mighty leap and went clear over the horse and flat on his back in the mud on the other side. The Duke heard him get up muttering, 'Dam yez! Not all together! One at a time.'"²

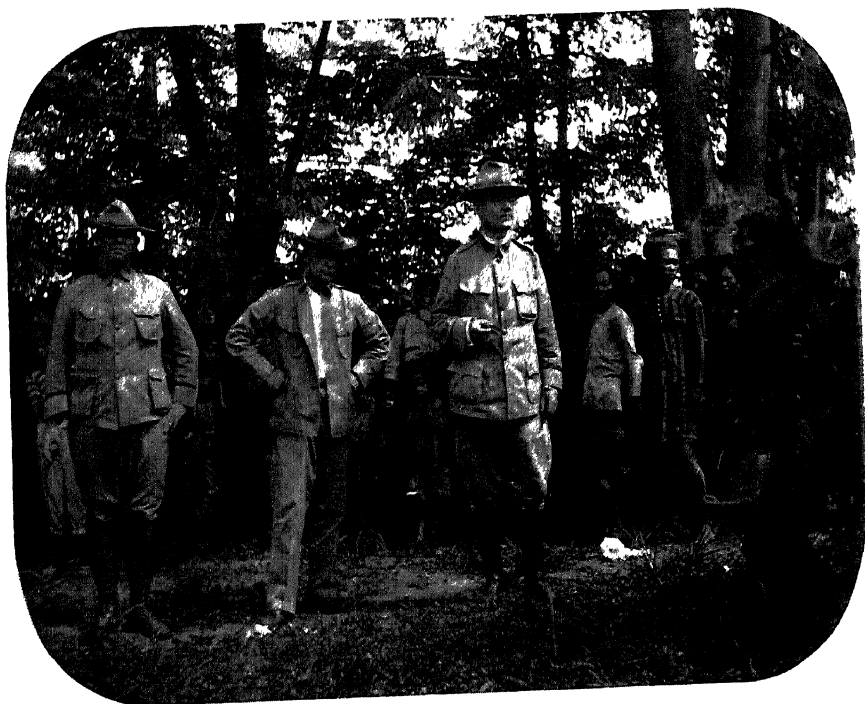
It must have been a personal disappointment to have missed a reunion with Scott at Jolo. Scott's work among the American In-

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, July 9, 1906.

² Ibid.



A MORO CHIEFTAIN AND HIS RETAINERS



A TOUR OF INSPECTION IN MINDANAO

dians had stood him in good stead among the Moros of Sulu, who had been "getting into a plastic condition ready to settle down to the arts of peace."

"The farewell of the Moro chiefs to Scott must have been quite affecting. They came from all points of the island the day he left: the Sultan, Indanan and their followers and their old time enemies, Jokanain, Kalbi and others. Scott had from time to time loaned out a number of guns. These he had to call in, in order to close his papers. Kalbi had a Mauser rifle he was very loath to part with. He begged Scott to give it back. Scott said, 'I no longer have any power; you must ask my successor.' Kalbi turned to Steever and repeated his request. Steever glanced at Scott and Scott said *sotto voce*, 'I loaned it to him a year ago and he has never done any harm with it. For a year he has been faithful to us. But you must decide for yourself.' Steever said to Kalbi, 'All-right, take the gun.'

"Kalbi burst into tears and went into the street in front of the Governor's house, where there was a great throng of Moros of lesser degrees. To them he preached for half an hour saying that the justice of the Americans was like the justice of God, that he had not believed that such men could be, etc., etc. All this had a good effect on the people.

"I agreed to come back to Jolo as soon as I had visited Davao. Then I could make a six or ten days' trip through the island, visiting all the principal men and confirming them in their attitude of loyalty to the government.

"I want to establish new schools in Sulu—we have only three—and build some roads. Schools and roads will be the islands' salvation. But I want trade schools. I want to start blacksmith shops, carpenter shops and that sort of thing. The Moros like that sort of work. We must teach them first what they like in order to secure our first influence over them. The other things will gradually follow. For its immediate effect one of the best things will be good roads. When the time comes the Sultan of Sulu can bring his carriage over from Singapore and ride in state from Maimbun to Jolo, and when Indanan and the other chiefs can turn out in their *carromatas* (which I have promised to give them as soon as they complete their roads), the situation will greatly change.

"Now each chief travels with his retinue of armed followers—fifty or sixty of them, according to his dignity—looking for a fight with some hereditary enemy. When the time comes that they ride in their carriages they will have to do away with the small armies of personal attendants.

"I brought over with me last night a cultivator and a 12-disc harrow as a present for Indanan. He used to be one of our most implacable enemies. He it was who, in Colonel Wallace's time here, offered to bring out a thousand of his Moros and fight a thousand Americans to determine who should rule in Jolo. Now he boasts that he is the first

farmer in Jolo. He has beautifully cultivated fields and is raising much hemp. . . .

"This morning I visited the Moro Exchange and the Moro School. The Exchange is doing very well, indeed. It was filled with men and women selling their wares—dried and fresh fish, woven cloth, tobacco, etc., and evidently will be at least as successful as the one at Zamboanga. The civilizing effect of these exchanges is immense by getting the people together, by teaching them the advantage of selling their wares for cash and getting them out of the clutches of the Chinese whose object has been to keep them in perpetual debt.

"The school under Mr. Miller is doing very well. The children read English passably well and did their arithmetic very creditably. It is a great pity that more Moro schools have not been established. My intention is to start as many as I can in purely manual training lines. I do not believe in wasting labor in teaching these people English. I intend, if the law does not prevent, to get Mohammedan Malays who speak English to take charge of our Moro schools. I intend also to take enlisted men, soldiers, who have a facility for managing natives, and put them in charge of schools."¹

Conditions and various frustrations limited the fulfillment of the enthusiastic plan of the late President of the War College for Moro education, which was no more remarkable in the contrasts of environment and duties than the picture of American school teachers scrubbing the filthy floors of their schoolhouses and trying by object lessons to get betel chewing mothers to wash their children and rid them of lice.

The character of the teachers differed. Some were college graduates, but Bliss found that one wrote very bad English and included profanity in his letters demanding an increase of pay.

"I have not the slightest faith in the education we are trying to give the Moros,"² he wrote after a year's experience of that passive—and, in this instance truculent—resistance in the East that wears the white man down. "Such schools as I have seen since I came to the province, with the exception of the one at Parang in Jolo, are practically futile."

He kept on insisting on industrial training and the consequent simple mental discipline as the first step in a land where it was considered sufficient scholarship for all if an occasional man could

¹ This is from a journal, July 8, 1906, which Bliss began after his arrival in the Moro Province, but did not continue.

² Letter from Bliss to Brigadier General Charles L. Hodges, November 16, 1907.

read the Koran. Life must be safe up in the Lake Lanao district before any kind of schools could be started there.

"Practically all the chiefs of this section are murderers and slave dealers, and it is the intention of the government to bring them to order and have such of them as are guilty of crime punished by the courts. We have enough object lessons to know what the native jefe will do to the tribesmen if we put him in power and protect him. It is the sole cause of the pillage and murders that have been going on in this section for an unknown number of years."¹

It was difficult to get competent trade teachers for the small pay that many college graduates would accept; but in face of discouragements which gave him low moments, he persevered the more doggedly, and could see real progress at the end of the second year of his rule and rejoice in the increasing enrollment of pupils.²

Any false move might strike the match to religious fanaticism. Earnest missionaries from home appeared in the hope of disproving the experience of missionary societies that the proselytization of Mohammedans is practically impossible. As ethical instructor and policeman Bliss was up in arms against the suggestion that a native Filipino bishop be sent to Mindanao,³ where there were many Christian Filipinos from the northern islands in the port towns, especially in Zamboanga. A Spanish bishop would be a much better assignment, if another bishop must be sent. "The Filipinos here hate and fear the Moros, and have no interests or associations with them; the Moros respond to this feeling with contempt."

The answer to the Filipino bishop might be the Moro *kris*. This two-handed sword, which all Moro warriors carried, need not be unsheathed for its downward stroke. Contact clove the cords that bound it in its two part wooden scabbard. To insist that a Moro give up his *kris* was almost equivalent to insisting he give up his religion.

"It has gradually dawned on the Moro that the Americans possibly meant what they said when they declared that they meant no attack on his religion or no unnecessary change in his customs. He has wanted to

¹ Bliss' annual report as Governor of the Moro Province, 1907.

² Bliss' annual report as Governor of the Moro Province, 1908.

³ Letter to Archbishop Herty, July 10, 1908.

see and remained waiting. . . . He is as ready to fight now as he ever was." ¹

Bliss' governing creed as the American satrap was concretely expressed when he received the news of the murder of two traders and lumbermen in the interior: "There are two things to keep in mind: first, that the natives must realize that murder can not be done lightly; second, to establish a system of justice here that will approximate the even decrees of the Almighty." ² The simple minded Moro ought to be able to understand that, if consistently practiced for a reasonable length of time.

The American datu personified the central government both in direct dealings with all native datos from Mandi of Zamboanga, and in settling the disputes between them without bloodshed to the most remote jungle chieftain. The astute Mandi of Zamboanga had become conspicuously occidentalized and sophisticated by association with foreigners in the capital, deserting the turban and loose pyjama blouse of brilliant colors for the white jacket with the gold studs in the collar, which the European then wore in the orient.

Bliss wrote in his journal which he started on his arrival but did not continue:

"Datu Mandi is very anxious to get rid of his wedding guests, who are eating him out of house and home. On July 4 his daughter Gapas was married to Abdullah, the son of Datu Piang from Cotabato valley. On the 3rd I had brought the wedding guests over from Cotabato. They came down from Piang's *rancheria* in a magnificent war canoe with one hundred rowers. They were dressed in their most gorgeous clothes and filled the air with their wild yells and the beating of tomtoms. At the mouth of the river they embarked on my steamer launch.

"I was invited to the wedding, and a most curious affair it was. The ceremony consisted of the 'courting.' A big bamboo arbor had been constructed to hold the bridal party and guests. Gapas, the bride, sat in the midst of a high pile of gorgeous silk cushions. Behind her were a couple of female slaves who steadily fanned her. On her left were the women of her father's harem (among them her mother) while in front, reclining on silken cushions, were some thirty female slaves. Gapas' hair was done up with great art, and she wore it in a sort of gold tiara studded with pearls. Her arms and ankles were covered with gold bands and she wore many pearls and a number of diamonds.

¹ Bliss' annual report as Governor of the Moro Province, 1908.

² Judge Richard Campbell to the author.

"On her right, also on high cushions, sat Abdullah, the bridegroom, but four or five feet away from Gapas. The two sat with their backs to each other, she with her eyes downcast, occasionally lifting them ever so slightly when one of the women of the harem or one of her handmaidens spoke to her, but never saying a word in reply; he now and then glancing over his shoulder at her. He also had his fan bearers, and also the slaves who carried his beautifully decorated *kris*, his betel boxes, etc.

"In front of him, in corresponding position to Gapas' slave girls, sat the principal retainers of Abdullah's father and his friends, and in their midst were the three Mohammedan priests. After a long while the priests moved up and sat down on the floor directly in front of Abdullah and began to read to him out of the Koran.

"Meanwhile the friends on both sides were using every art to get the couple to look at each other. He looked readily enough, but it was three long hours before she turned one lightning quick glance at him and then cast down her eyes again. Then everybody shouted for joy and Abdullah looked very happy. By the way, they seemed to be only children, they are only fifteen years old.

"After a while her father said something to her and she got up smiling, lifted her silken petticoat, showing her silken trousers and her bare sandaled feet and stepped over the cushions and through her slaves and came to where I was standing. She had learned a little English, and I talked with her for some time. I told her she was going to live among a different people, and she could do a great deal of good by teaching them the good American habits she had learned at Zamboanga.

"While I was talking to her, Abdullah got up and came over smiling and extended his hand to me. Then I asked Gapas to tell him that I was glad to meet him, etc. But she shrugged her shoulders, turned her back partly on him, and wouldn't say a word to him. Then everybody shouted with laughter and Abdullah looked a bit sheepish. Finally, they went back to their places.

"After about four hours of this, I got tired, and went out, stopping only to see a spear dance. I asked Mandi how long before his daughter would be really married. He said it would take about three days of this courting. This is the party I am to take back on the *Sabah* to Cotabato. . . ."

Datu Piang, the father of Abdullah, was the most powerful of the *datus*, part Chinese, who had risen from humble birth and poverty to marriage into the nobility and great wealth. He had many slaves, fourteen wives and thirty children; but probably his proudest possession was an eighteenth century muzzle-loading brass Spanish cannon which he brought forth with much pomp to salute the governor, who said to his aide that he would prefer to stand in front of it rather than behind it, if this would not be offensive to his host's

sensibilities.

Another datu, who could blow off no gunpowder in Bliss' honor, offered him a more substantial proof of loyalty and efficiency. He had been told to bring in some murderous raiders. Bliss on a tour of inspection asked him what progress he had made. In answer a henchman opened a bag and rolled three bloody human heads on the floor. There the philosopher's tact failed him. The datu could not quite understand, when he had tried so hard to please, why Bliss should cry out, "For God's sake, take them away!"¹

On one occasion the necessities of high Moro politics led Bliss to favor the contractual practice of European royalty in keeping the balance of power stable. The Princess Putri, aged about forty, was the childless widow of old Datu Utu. She was of the same family as Manginin, the Sultan of Magindanao, whose first ancestor, according to an old manuscript, translated by Dr. Najeeb M. Saleeby of our ethnological survey, was descended from the Apostle of God. Manginin was the twenty-first in descent from Sharif Kabungsuwan, who converted Mindanao to Islam, and who, as his second wife, married Putri, who had been begotten by Mamulu out of a bamboo and become human. The Putri of Bliss' time required just as much courting as the daughter of Mandi, and all the invocations and the beating of toms failed to bring her a child to continue the royal line in the pure ancient royal blood.

As military commander Bliss held throughout his term that order for the present among the fractious chieftains depended upon the wise show of sufficient armed force to prevent its employment in action; as civil governor that it depended upon another kind of wisdom, the art of keeping the balance between the two so adjusted that there would be no slipping back in the steps of progress which was our mission in the Philippines. Therefore, he opposed the reduction of the regular garrisons because the province seemed peaceful, until it was certain this would not bring on another "slaughtering."

"The Moro does not regard acts of piracy as resistance to the government. It is a legitimate source of income to be worked if it can be done without detection. Where the danger of detection is great he does not attempt it. There is no trouble along the Cotabato River—in former days

¹ Judge Richard Campbell to the author.

a hive where pirates swarmed—because a Moro cannot travel there a half a day without running into an American garrison.”¹

The former customs collector of Cuba wrote to Major G. M. Barbour, who was about to become collector at Sitanki, that he should so perform his duties as to avoid the use of force.

“You will proceed on the assumption that these people will be found to be densely ignorant of the nature and object of the tax which is collected from them in the form of customs duties. From the very beginning you will therefore explain to them what the law is, telling them that it applies without exception or distinction to all people in the Philippine archipelago who import merchandise from foreign countries. You will find that this will tax your patience to the utmost.”

The people were as resistant to the *cedula* as to customs duties, their protests and excuses why they should not pay it just as ingenuous. The following is among the examples in point:

“You mention about the *cedula*. It is very good. I cannot comply at once because the people living here belong to Pang Opao and to Salli Bangsuan Opao. As for myself and my two sons, we will not pay just now because my brother was killed on account of the *cedula* tax. The persons who killed my brother are known. Grandson of Pang. Anti was the leader. As for myself, I am powerless. I depend upon Panglima and the Governor of Jolo, and especially upon God who made heavens and earth. Greetings to all.”

Yet customs duties were collected honestly; yet some of the taxes were paid. American, European, Chinese, Japanese and Filipino merchants were protected in their clash of racial prejudices; but the Filipinos on the west coast were deprived of their arms. If a Filipino shot a Moro the massacre of Filipinos would begin. The laws about the pearl fisheries required as much explanation as the taxes. Questionnaires were sent out to learn what articles the Moros would buy; trade slowly increased. Roads were being built into the interior. The natives who deserted their villages on stilts at the first sight of an American, perhaps later to creep up on an American at night, were brought under authority and instruction; the wild taught to cultivate patches of ground and live a settled life. An unremitting siege continued against cholera which the native habits

¹ Bliss' annual report as Governor of the Moro Province, 1908.

avored.

To Moro fatalism a pestilence was Allah's will, and if you died from it, or fighting, you stepped into paradise. Datus said they could not control a fanatic subject who—in the conviction that the more people he killed then the higher place he would have in paradise—broke into insane frenzy which started him on a rampage of random murders in a village street; but datu changed their minds when American soldiers or gunboats could run *amok* against the datu himself.

Bliss' father, who shared Beecher's fervor for the northern crusade, might have held that his son should have used fire and sword to destroy slavery in the Moro provinces, but Moro slavery was a sacred institution in which education had to be the handmaiden of force. In the little Sulu island group conditions favored action against it. But in spite of its legal abolition it was difficult, in the recesses of the jungle, to tell which of a datu's subjects was a free man and which a chattel. The datu might say that he had no slaves, and his slaves would not admit they were. An American census-taker might have had no entries under the heading of slaves if we left it to the slaves' own testimony. We could prevent only open practice and sale, which had previously been common. Our country, after all its expenditures in the Philippines, had no funds to spare for the thorough and punitive measures which abolition would have required against native sentiment expressing itself in "I am Pang Opao's man."

Bliss studied the folklore of the Moros, he learned to speak Malay well enough to be understood. In response to the Moro story of the monkey on the back of the crocodile defying the crocodile to do his worst, he could tell a datu a Joel Chandler Harris Br'er Rabbit story. He had a traveler's appreciation of the long journey of a proud Moro who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He might tap Confucius out of the memory of his reading in a talk with a Chinese trader. A squabble between datu received just as much attention as between French and Italian military representatives at Versailles in the World War. He would say out of the memory of the rural homilies of boyhood days, as he did at Versailles, "Some pork will bile that way," or "the hoofs go with the horns and hide."

Reports of officers and teachers, who had leaves from their posts,

and of explorers, adventurous, official, scientific and commercial, who came out of the jungle that had been less known than the heart of Africa, fed Bliss' insatiable mental curiosity. He had his little steamer the *Sabah* for his inspections up the rivers and along the indented coast line and among the Sulu Islands. A new pastime held his attention. The spiral, chambered shell of the nautilus had many tales to tell him. The tetrabranchiate cephalopods were numerous on the shores of Mindanao. He made a collection of their shells.

We lack more of his observations and experiences in his own words about his rule of the Moro country because soon he did not write them to Mrs. Bliss. She joined him soon after his arrival at Zamboanga, and he had both his son and daughter with him a part of the time, a home again, this time under the palms in the climate which is the most agreeable in the Philippines. Mrs. Bliss learned to know Malay better than he, but could not keep up with him in his knowledge of seashells.

In the afternoons, when he was not absent on inspections, he would have his walk over a three-mile course in the environs of Zamboanga with his aide, Lieutenant Arthur Poillon, who retained his youthful *joie de vivre* as a member of his staff at Versailles, and return, his pores cleared to the joy of the shower in the tropics as the furnace sun swept down toward the rim of the sapphire sea. Breezes rustled the palm trees, whetting the healthy appetite of the giant for dinner. In the growing cool of the night he would read until the cool of the morning, or sit up talking with Judge Springer, the district judge, or a group which often included Richard Campbell, the Provincial attorney, who was still too close to his mother Ireland to allow conversation to die for want of a tale or a flash of wit on his part.

"I never had a detail so agreeable," Bliss wrote afterward.¹

Others had the same recollection of service at Zamboanga in those days. The call of the East to them was in the close companionship in a land of rich, glassy, tropical green and gorgeous sunsets, and of a mission in which each might see the growing results of his individual effort as one sees the growth of a tree on his grounds. They were apprehensive lest progress be arrested or their labors lost. Bliss would guard against this. The civil and military ruler spoke in the

¹ Letter from Bliss to Colonel James A. Irons, May 12, 1909.

same voice when he said in answer to a suggestion that, so orderly had the province become, garrisons might be reduced:

"We have killed many Moros and produced peace. Why should we tempt them to war by the withdrawal of the evidence of our power, the presence of which is the only thing that will keep the Moro at peace during the present generation?"¹

In turn, he said to his comrades of the army, after tribute to its work and to the men who had given their lives:

"We must recognize the supremacy of the civil law. We must remember that we will be judged by a severer and stricter standard than is applied to others."²

He told the Moros that peace in this generation, as elsewhere in the world, meant hope for a future generation in which if any one was a slave it was his own fault.

"To produce more we must work more. Among some people, and they are not entirely confined to the orient, though they may be found here in unusual numbers, there is a false idea prevalent that manual labor is not honorable, and that it is beneath the dignity of men. . . . You should lay aside your weapons and rather spend your money on implements to till the soil and increase your wealth."³

Thus spoke the paternal counselor in the simplest of philosophy, to which little need be added in warring Europe a few years later. And to the Filipinos from the northern islands who lived in the Moro province:

"You must bury all petty social and religious prejudices and meet together with the government on common ground. You now have the liberty to worship God according to your conscience, liberty to work and enjoy the fruits of your labor, the right to appeal for any measure you desire enacted into law or against any measure repugnant to you. Your false teachers preach to you the delights of the time when you shall rule the Moro and the pagan. How will it be if the Moro and the pagan rule you?"⁴

¹ Bliss' annual report as Governor of the Moro Province, 1908.

² Address, opening of the Zamboanga District Fair, 1908.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Filipinos in the Moro province dreamed of the day of their national independence when the ten million of their race should turn to the conquest of the half million Moros. Bliss and his co-workers feared that then their labors would be lost in the bitterest imaginable of unending racial and religious warfare.

If it had happened, as it well might to a man more ambitious and not so careful as he in his day in the Moro province, that the news-flashes carried the report of a Moro uprising and the massacre of American soldiers, there would have been a day's thrill for the home public in picturing a giant Bliss of square jaw and pugnacious nose leading a punitive expedition. Since bloodshed wins the headlines where peaceful administration attracts no attention, he would have won a reputation as field soldier which might have publicly qualified him as a front line commander on the front in France against the skillful German hosts.

As it was he had again the praise of his superiors when the best news in official channels was that he was "keeping 'em quiet"—those fanatic wards of ours which had come in the bundle which we received through victory and purchase with the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Major James G. Harbord, later the first Chief of Staff of our army in France, had confounded the pessimistic prophecies of old hands by making a successful Moro constabulary.

Our people might read stories of romance about neighboring Borneo and Java, but we were not interested in stories about the Moros. This was too much of a reminder that we had neglected to examine the bundle on the doorstep before we took it into the republican house.

However, the way that our servants had to deal in so unprecedented a fashion in colonial rule with a problem so alien to our institutions, and on so exotic a background, makes a page of history which is worth some attention for its own sake. In dealing with Moro feuds or later with the great European feud, the reading of the Peloponnesian wars made Bliss feel historically at home. Incidentally, the Moro province was a strange training ground for men conspicuous in the World War.

Bliss' successor as Governor of the Moro Province was Brigadier General John J. Pershing who had come to a familiar scene. Previously Captain Pershing's success in controlling the datus of one

of the most recalcitrant sections of Mindanao, new to outside authority, had won his brigadiership, and thus opened the way for him to become the fifth four-star general, as the collectorship of Cuban customs opened the way for Bliss to become the sixth.

From Zamboanga Bliss went to Manila, where for four months he served as army commander in the Philippines.

X

TICKLISH GUARD DUTY

HOMEWARD bound in the summer of 1909, that honesty with which he never compromised in official or private life had its expression when, although Brigadier General Bliss had been given freedom of the port in San Francisco, he said:

"But I have some silk from China, which is dutiable. I must pay the duty"—and he paid it. Should the former collector of customs, in the days of the army occupation of Cuba, who had irritated some army officers by his ruling against military class exceptions, fail to obey it himself?

His next detail was to the presidency of the War College which does not appear to have been as welcome at the time to the military scholar as his colleagues supposed.

"You say you hope that the work in Washington will be congenial to me," he wrote. "Your wish is very kind, but I do not like Washington and shall be glad to get away again."¹

Assigned to command the red contingent which attacked Boston in the Massachusetts maneuvers, he had such practical experience in directing troops as is afforded by a war game with actual troops in place of war college games on paper. He had two companies about to march on the Boston Common when time was called. Those who never visualized him as a field commander thought he could not have worked out the strategy for himself; he must have cribbed it from a book of history. He was far from thinking he had qualified as a future Grant or Lee, but his upper lip probably twitched with his philosopher's smile.

After a year with the War College he was sent to command the Department of California with his headquarters at San Francisco. Now the keeper of the peace among the Moros became the keeper of international peace. We had the first of the alarms of war with Mexico which sprang from the Mexican revolutions. For thirty-five years dictator Porfirio Diaz had been the master of Mexico in an

¹ To. W. Cameron Forbes, September 27, 1909.

era of economic progress and security which had accumulated a huge American interest in mines and railroads and other developments. President Taft decided on previsionary military preparation owing to "Ambassador Wilson's report to me that Mexico was boiling; that General Diaz was on a volcano; that ninety percent of the people were in sympathy with the insurrectos; that a general explosion was possible at any time; that forty thousand or more Americans would be assailed and American investments of more than a billion of dollars would be injured or destroyed because of the anti-American spirit of the insurrectos."¹

Our naval and marine forces received their orders for concentration at San Diego. Wood, who was now Chief of Staff, bade Bliss have thirty days' supplies packed and ready for transport without attracting public attention. The business of forming a provisional brigade and then moving it to southern California under Bliss' personal command was conducted in a manner neither to alarm the Mexicans nor to stir the adventurous spirit in Americans that our object was offensive.

The President did not want to intervene unless absolutely necessary; he had taken a great responsibility in ordering the mobilization which might serve as useful training; and "I beg you to be careful to prevent friction."

Once the brigade was established on the border that responsibility became Bliss'. It was a test not only for him but for the officers and soldiers under him. Our army had its tradition of conscientious and patient subordination to the civil branch in keeping peace with the Indians on the frontier. This had been reinforced for the younger officers in their half-civil and half-military duties in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

There were American interests, with confidential relations with the leaders of Mexican factions, which would have welcomed our occupation of Mexico. This an incident might precipitate. Americans might be killed, and our public indignation demand reprisals. Mexicans might fire on American soldiers; a Mexican chieftain in distress might seek refuge with his followers by crossing the imaginary line on stretches of sand; his enemy might pursue him, thus spilling their armed guerrilla action over on to our side.

¹ President Taft, from Augusta, Georgia, March 1, 1911.

Bliss' singularly tireless concentration on any mission that fully challenged his powers was bent in all the close watch of detail of a company commander in confining the Mexican family quarrel within its own yard; in detecting any spark which might burst into flame, and promptly smothering it. His knowledge of Spanish enabled him the more quickly to learn Mexican ways as he had learned Cuban and Philippine ways.

Officers sometimes found him irritatingly painstaking in his precautions. Perhaps it was his consciousness that he was not known as a field soldier that led to his intensity in being very soldierly and a little gruff when serving with troops, with the result that many officers who served with him are surprised to learn that he had a sense of humor or ever told stories or indulged in light conversation. They were in touch with only one compartment of his mind when the others were closed. But all compartments were now pre-occupied with the President's instruction to prevent friction, and he avoided any incident which might have required armed action and which would have won him fame but made his country a lot of trouble.

His next command after the Department of California, from which he was transferred July 29, 1911, was that of the Department of the East, with headquarters at Fort Totten, until February 13, 1913. As this detail drew to a close his family rejoiced over father's talk that he really contemplated a holiday. Indeed, they had reached the Panama Canal when the War Department recalled him February twenty-sixth. The waves of Mexican revolution were again lapping our border, this time in the region of the Rio Grande. The commander who had ably kept the peace so successfully on the western Mexican border was seen as the one who could keep it on the eastern. Leaving his family to continue the tour, he took a steamer to New Orleans in hastening to his new post at Fort Sam Houston.

Funston in taking command at Fort Sam Houston said to his staff: "Gentlemen, you each have your own duties. Attend to them and regulate your own hours." Bliss said: "Gentlemen, office hours are from 8 A. M. to 4 P. M. I expect you to be here when I want you." To some officers the philosopher appeared to be a martinet.¹

Now he had the same problem as with the provisional brigade,

¹ Brigadier General W. S. Scott to the author.

but on a larger scale. American adventurers were crossing from our side and refugees from the Mexican, American travelers being murdered and property destroyed as the fighting became more bitter and chaotic. Again he had the reward of industrious watchfulness, of his faculty for foreseeing contingencies and forestalling dangerous emergencies. Again he had the tribute from a high superior:

"It would be difficult to conceive of more embarrassing circumstances than those existing along the border during the time in question; even slight mistakes were likely to have momentous consequences. The service called for intelligence, courage, activity, and the exercise of a rare degree of vision. You have had under your jurisdiction over a thousand miles of border patrol, and have had to dispose of questions of the most difficult and delicate character daily. That you have done so in a way to win universal approbation of your course entitles you and all those under you not only to my thanks, but those of the country I and you represent in this regard."¹

It was while he was at Fort Sam Houston that public attention turned from the Mexican troubles to the outbreak of the World War, from Mexican to French and Belgian refugees. There, over the details of patrol, he read the news of the Marne, of Lublin and Tannenberg. Meanwhile, his old classmate, Hugh L. Scott, had leap-frogged him. Scott, a major general, was now Chief of Staff. On February 13, 1915, Bliss became Assistant Chief of Staff, but was not to receive his second star until November 20, 1915. He was sixty-one, within three years of retirement, and yet on the threshold of his supreme responsibility and achievement.

¹ Letter from Secretary of War, Lindley M. Garrison, to Bliss, January 28, 1914.

XI

KEEPING PEACE ON THE BORDER

"How are you, Bliss?" said Scott. "Fine. We started together, and we go out together," and Bliss took his place behind the desk in the office adjoining his classmate's.¹

It had been Scott's turn to leapfrog Bliss when President Wilson had appointed him Chief of Staff in 1914 for the usual four year term. Bliss might now entertain no hope of ever attaining to the highest position in the army. In brotherhood the two classmates would share the seats of the mighty until they were sixty-four.

Bliss had been summoned to Washington not only as Assistant Chief of Staff but as chief of the Mobile Army Division, which he was to organize on paper, looking toward Mexican complications, and with his back squarely turned toward the European trenches.

When the classmates met in the morning, after they had read the communiqués from the war fronts, Scott might say to Bliss, "The Germans are apparently starting a great drive against Russia," and Bliss might reply, "Yes, they plan to end the job on the eastern front this year to be ready for the British new army when it comes into action next spring."

Their exchange of glances implied the consciousness that it was forward of them to say as much as this. As for one asking the other, "Do you think we'll be drawn in?" (the time being early in the year 1915) this was not done officially, although it might be personally between two classmates, especially if Scott should put it in the Indian sign language or Bliss in Latin or Greek. As for any reference to what the army would do if we were drawn in, this was as heretic as for an American soldier to take sides in partisan politics. It practically amounted to insubordination.

In his effort to keep our people neutral-minded at the outset of the World War President Wilson had bidden army and navy officers not to talk about the war. He had repeated his order later, although naturally the soldier-mind would regard the fluctuations

¹ Scott to the author.

of the European struggle in professional detachment while the civilian public was subject to propagandic appeals to emotion and inherited racial animosities.

To Bliss, at least, the Presidential warning was hardly necessary. He knew politics through service in ten administrations, under the eye of a secretary of war in six, his long experience in Washington, and the varied positions he had held. The more he learned of politics the more strictly he held to his rule, the more inclined he was to say to young officers, "This is a matter of political policy, the military has nothing to do with it."

President Wilson deprecated any military preparedness as prejudicial to his policy in making a new world of reason in place of force after the military conclusion of the World War. Bliss never forgot that the Constitution, the President and the Congress were supreme. His private letters, as well as official reports and memoranda, are singularly free from any criticism or slighting reference to the executive or law making power. Citizen Bliss might think there were some unwise men loose with too much authority in any administration, but it was not for officer Bliss to say so.

Officer Bliss would take no side in the World War until he was under orders to act. Although he had no word of advocacy of our entry into the war, it is evident that he was convinced that events would force it. Even after this the philosopher would be unable to think that one side or the other could be altogether right or wrong, which might be construed by some minds as inevitably dulling his military enthusiasm, not to say compromising his probity as a partisan. However, this quality made him the more valuable as a frank adviser whose view of public passion would be unclouded by sharing it.

Lindley M. Garrison, Wilson's first Secretary of War, who had discovered Bliss' wisdom in command on the Mexican border, wanted him near at hand. In turn, Garrison soon learned to recognize Bliss' extraordinary power in bringing forth—out of a confusion of arguments and contradictory precedents—a lucid exposition of all sides of a problem, to which he might or might not add his own recommendations. Thus the chief had the land mapped not only in the immediate vicinity but into the distances where he had to travel; the chief could see the forest for the trees.

Once the chief had decided on a policy, although it was against Bliss' view, he knew he could turn to Bliss to write a brief in its support because he knew that no points in its favor would be left out. It was said of Bliss that he could take one side or the other with equal controversial interest.¹ To some partisans this facility suggested that he had no convictions of his own. To lawyers, it was all in the course of serving your client, to philosophers it was simply developing a subject.

Bliss' memoranda often led to the inquiry if he had studied law. He had not in any set law course, but he had had enough decisions to make as an administrator, he had read enough opinions by judge advocates general and had enough discussions with eminent lawyers and the great legal expert of the army, Major General Enoch H. Crowder, to make the equivalent of more than many lawyers get out of the best law courses. Crowder said Bliss had a legal mind.² Certainly Bliss' career, from the day his head was above the edge of the family table, had grounded him in a sense of equity and a taste for dialectics, but it was not his interest in the intellectual exercise of writing a brief for a chief's policy and thus making it his own which appealed to him. When in doubt between two roads leading to the same goal, it is preferable to get started on one than to hesitate at the forks.

This applied only when there was little to choose between two roads. When Bliss saw morasses ahead, or unbridged streams which could not be forded, and history and ethics were being defied in violation of basic principles, he became an embattled advocate who parleyed with no qualifying doubts. Now he had no use for his familiar gesture which implied, "This amuses or interests me." The mustache bristled over a set lip, as he said:

"It can't be done" or "It's absurd" or "It will raise hell and get us nowhere except into trouble," or "It's running around in circles when we better save our energy by standing still" or "It's been tried thousands of times since it failed under the Romans and the same elements which made it fail in the past apply in this situation." If reasons were wanted he gave them in cumulative sequence to an impressive conclusion. A chief who had had much experience of

¹ Major General W. S. Graves to the author.

² Crowder to the author.

Bliss usually accepted Bliss' view when Bliss was in this messianic mood. Some critics thought Bliss was disinclined to try experiments. On this score he once remarked that he did not think that there was any use of trying again the juvenile experiment of lifting yourself by your bootstraps. But he once surprised a young man by saying, "Let's take a more youthful view. A lot of fresh water will run over the old millwheel yet."

As the World War sank its steel fingers deeper into the vitals of all peoples, and German victories continued, the student of military science did some deep thinking, and out loud, to classmate Scott, as well as when he paced the floor at home visualizing the war's horrors and its lessons to soldier and civilian in the pictures of the wrestling armies in blood soaked mud and dust. It was against his nature to fool himself in these soliloquies.

Our army must limit its official cognizance of Armageddon's spreading havoc to reading the meager reports of our military attachés who had to remain in the capitals at the rear of the forces of action trying to keep abreast of the progress of arms and tactics which were so rapidly changing. Since the sinking of the *Lusitania* the majority of Americans had turned against Germany. Public passion brought on wars, America's was rising, and calling for better national defense. Bliss shared the restlessness of army councils at the ban on even normal staff provision for an emergency in which our public would expect a prodigy of achievement from the army for which it was utterly unprepared. He made this memorandum for record's sake:

"It was early in the autumn of 1915. I was Acting Chief of Staff. Mr. Breckinridge was, for a day or two, Acting Secretary of War. He came into my office early one morning and said that the President had summoned him a few minutes before. He found him holding a copy of the *Baltimore Sun* in his hand, 'trembling and white with passion.' The President pointed to a little paragraph of two lines in an out-of-the-way part of the sheet, evidently put in just to fill space. It read something like this: 'It is understood that the General Staff is preparing a plan in case of war with Germany.'

"The President asked Mr. Breckinridge if he supposed that was true. Mr. Breckinridge said that he did not know. The President directed him to make an immediate investigation and, if it proved true, to relieve at once every officer of the General Staff and order him out of Washington.

Mr. Breckinridge put the investigation up to me.

"I told him that the law creating the General Staff made it its duty 'To prepare plans for the national defense'; that I was President of the War College when the General Staff was organized in 1903; that from that time till then the College had studied over and over again plans for war with Germany, England, France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, etc. I said that if the President took the action threatened, it would only make patent to everybody what pretty much everybody already knew and would create a great political row, and, finally, it would be absurd.

"I think the President realized this in a cooler moment. Nothing further was said to him about the matter, nor did he again mention it. But Mr. Breckinridge directed me to caution the War College to 'camouflage' its work. This resulted in practically no further *official* studies."

The War College was Bliss' own child; World War or no World War, it proceeded with the work which it was its duty to pursue if we were to have an army and a war college. A certain number of officers were kept on general staff duty in Washington by act of the Congress. The President, discontinuing their duty, would be stepping as much out of bounds as if he appeared on the field of battle and took direction of the troops out of the hands of the commanding general. Bliss' offended logic expressed itself in an Olympian indignation which his words but faintly convey.

How could a war college study practical movements of troops and supplies and their tactical disposition without at least a concrete problem on paper? The President's scholarship did not include military technique. Sorely pressed and harassed by the racial animosities which the war had aroused at home, and the cross fire of propaganda, he had happened on that item at a moment when it was the added straw's weight to rouse his anger.

In a few months he met the rising tide of demand for some preparedness by his call for heavy naval appropriations and strengthening our land forces. Out of the conflict of plans Secretary Garrison decided on that of the "continental army."¹ Bliss gave this the lawyer's support but, to judge by his memoranda, he did not personally believe in it. Three years would elapse before it would give us 500,000 men, and the Mexican or World War emergency which should require them would not wait so long.

¹ *Newton D. Baker: America at War.* Palmer, I, 42, 53.

In the sheaves of war department documents on the subject no word appeared suggesting that the proposed preparation had any purpose except that of repelling invasion. We were to resist conquest by the Teutons or Allies, whichever won the war. To Bliss this was another absurdity. The prospect that the war worn victors would have the ability to overcome our navy, and then the martial enthusiasm to cross the Atlantic, was to him starting from false premises. It roused his dislike of quibbling with facts.

If we should need a larger army, it would be to occupy Mexico, or if its action were related to the World War, to throw our weight in the balance on the continent of Europe. He opposed the Swiss system which had been much advocated because it was based solely on defense; he objected to the continental army plan as wrong because it added a third element to our forces, when we should aim to make the regular army and National Guard more homogeneous.

The memoranda which an officer makes for his chiefs, become records of his own proposals or his views when the chief requests them. Bliss' memoranda during the two years before our entry into the war have a remarkable foresight which might have appeared clairvoyant six months after our entry. A memorandum which he wrote before he left Sam Houston for Washington is a piece of military logic, as valuable for soldiers to read as his letters on peace after the World War for unreasoning pacifists and unreasoning militarists.

Clearly he had the possibility of our entry into the World War in mind, or the possession of a sufficient force to compel such European respect that we might win a peaceful victory to insure the President's "peace without victory." With the passage of time he had forgotten that he had written this memorandum.¹ When reminded of it, he remarked, "This was how I saw it as a veteran officer at the time." He stressed the long period of preparation necessary before our men would be available for modern action, not less than a year; the need of guns which took so long to manufacture, when artillery had become so important. In reviewing all the plans

¹ Bliss to the author.

suggested for strengthening the army he said that no plan could be perfect, the essential being to proceed at once with some plan. This could not be based on any expectation that Congress would appropriate a large sum of money for its execution. In the memorandum from Sam Houston, January 15, 1915, he said that the answer to whether this plan or that plan as worked out by the War College would be adequate was not "susceptible to mathematical demonstration."

"Every day, in the war now going on in Europe, the lives and limbs of thousands of men are staked, as though on the throw of the dice, on this question. Every day, at some place or another, the commander of some force, large or small, advances to an attack in the execution of a plan which he must be supposed to believe to be adequate for his ultimate purpose. He determines as accurately as he can the number of his opponents, the strength of their position, the power of their artillery and other adjuncts of defense, the probable amount of their ammunition, the courage and tenacity of their men as previously demonstrated in his own experience or in that of others communicated to him.

"With all these assumptions in mind he gathers what he believes to be the necessary force of his own, he brings up his reserves, perhaps borrows artillery and reserve ammunition from the troops on his right and left. Meanwhile, the commander of the defense, with more or less knowledge of what his opponent is contemplating, makes his own assumptions and his corresponding plans.

"The commanders are of equal intelligence. They are assisted by equally intelligent staffs. Each of them knows that the lives of his men, his own reputation, possibly the very life of his nation, depends upon the adequacy of his plan. Every available human agency has been employed to guarantee that adequacy. You and I, with complete foreknowledge of these plans and of the means of executing them, might be unable to pick a flaw in either of them; each plan is apparently perfect. Yet it is a foregone conclusion that the event cannot be a draw; either the attack or the defense must win, and a few hours after the execution of the two plans has begun the event, with its terrible losses to both sides, will prove that one plan was adequate and the other inadequate."

Again the founding President of the War College warned the students of the staff in their controversies over plans in theory, for which no appropriation might be forthcoming, that they were only advisory to their civilian chiefs, and that rather than stall progress by their search for adequacy, as the proponent of each plan under-

stood it, they should be ready to go ahead with any plan, although it might be made by civilian chiefs, which the Congress would accept.

"It cannot be assumed," he wrote, "that all the intelligence of the army is embodied in the General Staff. It would be a small package to contain such a large amount of goods."

Whether Bliss was born to be a lawyer, a professor, a statesman, a soldier or a sailor, this masterful document, covering all technical points as well as those of policy, is one of the many contributions which accounted for the later tendency of the American staff to turn to Bliss for sound reasoning as a chief of staff as they do to Root and Baker as secretaries of war. He concluded:

"As for us, I think that we are justified in accepting the adequacy of any plan, to be carried into effect in time of peace, which gives the reasonable hope that it will hold off whatever enemy we assume as probable and as the most probable long enough for us to organize the resources of the country, after war threatens, to such a degree as will reasonably assure our ultimate success. In other words it is a plan which confines as far as possible the burden of war to the time of war."

Thus, in a sense, this memorandum—which was written by Bliss in the midst of his duties on the Mexican border shepherding refugees and guarding against bandit invasions—envisioned the trenches of the Allies on the western front as providing the wall behind which we should prepare for the ultimate success. We should have this, the ultimate success, sooner if we went ahead with some plan which the civilian leaders found that the Congress would accept instead of wasting time on staff polemics.

Meanwhile it is interesting to note an example of Bliss' pungency in the course of official routine when we had an alarm about Japan. Asked for his view as to whether we should withdraw or reinforce our Philippine garrisons, he replied that we were under present obligations to maintain order and our sovereignty in the islands, he had heard of no contemplated action by the Congress to change this status, and he thought that withdrawal under these circumstances would be a national humiliation.¹ He was for "standing pat." No reinforcement was needed for the requirements of peace.

¹ Memorandum, May 15, 1915.

"If it is needed for war I ask, 'What war?' " He saw none in sight with Japan allied to Britain and France who wanted our friendship against Germany. "If we cannot hold everything let us lose with honor what we must, but save the most important if we can. If we must weaken our home forces by further drafts, let them go to Hawaii and the Canal zone." But, as it appears elsewhere in his papers, he held it was our duty to keep our pledge of eventual withdrawal from the islands.

Bliss' real concern through 1915 was to prevent our having to make war on Mexico, which had for him no martial or adventurous appeal. In tracing the influence of unconsidered events upon great events, in following the main stream's course back to the provincial freshet which adds the weight of waters which break the dam, place must be given to our Mexican policy in the next few months. It permitted the earlier exercise of effective military power and supporting morale in France; it gave us the lesson which led to an earlier public acceptance of the draft. In the World War, which an assassination in the little town of Sarajevo precipitated, our patrol of the Rio Grande was related to the future of the Seine, the Vistula and the Rhine; the mood of a Mexican chieftain, or the defeat of the schemes of a German propagandist in Mexico, may have chosen which side should have the imperious mood and which the petitioner's in the remapping of Europe. If we grant that the American effort through the balance in favor of the Allies, then an error by Baker, Bliss or Pershing in dealing with the situation between our own and the Guatemalan frontier in 1916 might have meant that Pershing would have been too late in France.

In February, 1916, when the President, finding Congress unfavorable to Secretary-Garrison's continental army plan, rejected it, and Garrison resigned, the advocates of preparedness were astounded when they heard that his successor was to be Newton D. Baker, former mayor of Cleveland, who had been classed as a pacifist of the capital P group.

On the morning that this quiet, physically slender man took his seat at his desk, there stood before him the giant white-haired Scott and the giant Bliss. Their respectful attitude to their new chief

masked their curiosity as to what kind of a fellow he was, which his action on the dispatches Scott held in his hand must decide with a prompt yes or no.

The dispatches had news proving how warrantable had been Bliss' own vigilance in command on the Mexican border, which had been regarded frequently by subordinates as captious, not to say pinpricking. Our garrison at Columbus, New Mexico, asleep and unwarned, had been surprised in a night raid by Francisco Villa and five hundred men who had killed and wounded eight civilians and seven officers and soldiers.¹ If we failed to make any forcible response to this violation of international law it would encourage further raids and massacres of civilians and lead to serious complications. The faces of both Bliss and Scott said what Scott said in words. In answer to their recommendation Baker said: "Let us proceed." The expedition under Pershing with orders to pursue and break up Villa's band was immediately mobilized.

A counselor's foresight of the consequences of action, his "if you do this," or "having done this," then "you must expect this," is the real test of his worth. If he is right five out of six times, then the chief is not inclined to replace him until he is sure of a successor who will be right six out of seven times. Three days after the Villa raid Bliss pictured for his chief the responsibility we had undertaken in crossing the border with an armed force; he saw the Pershing expedition as the Mexicans themselves would see it.²

They would not distinguish between our action and an act of war. They would consider that the invasion by the Gringos had begun. There were a hundred thousand Mexican troops who were used to their kind of warfare, under the different chieftains, who might unite or, if they did not, some of them make further raids into our territory, which they would justify by our own expedition, and which our small scattered garrisons from the Rio Grande to the Pacific could not prevent. He visualized Pershing's future situation even before Pershing had entered Mexico. It would be very different from that of the seizure of Vera Cruz in 1914.

¹ *Newton D. Baker: America at War.* Palmer. I, 12.

² Memorandum, March 13, 1916.

"They will soon be beyond assured communication with their home government. They will be in hostile country surrounded by enemies, and they will do as soldiers in the circumstances must do. If they think that Villa and his band is in a certain town and refuses to surrender they must attack that town. If Villa retreats they must follow him; if he breaks up into small bands our people must more or less scatter in order to follow them.

"It was very easy to say to the commander of that expedition 'When you have seized the city, go no farther with your troops, do nothing unless the enemy actually attacks you.' But when you tell an American general, with 4,000 or 5,000 troops, to go into Mexico and break up certain bands of bandits, you can put no such limitation on his action."

If there were further raids across our border and we should have to send further expeditions, where should we get the men for these or the men to reinforce Pershing if need be? As a safeguard to our policy of avoiding actual intervention Bliss favored increasing our forces on the border by calling for volunteers.

"If we do not make these preparations the Mexicans are the more likely to take such action as will eventually force intervention against our will after we have suffered initial disaster that will embitter our people and make their attitude toward Mexico more uncompromising than it otherwise would be."

Our policy prevented our taking the offensive on a large scale but in order to assure its success by escaping forcible intervention, we should avoid the appearance of softness which would invite any chieftain to win popular glory by the prospect that he could safely beard our army. Chieftains must be assured that we should be able promptly to repeat the pursuit of a Villa in response to further incursions. The maintenance of our military prestige should be the proof of our good intentions through sufficient force to make a general invasion if we chose, while our action should be strictly confined to police duty against offenders.

Under the law at the time the President could not send the National Guard to the border. The Congress would not make other provision for reinforcements. On June 13th it passed the National Defense Act which gave the President power to assign the Guard to border patrol, and provided for increments which would double the regulars and raise the militia arm to over five hundred thousand—

provided that men enlisted. The crisis that Bliss had foreseen came. The President, as soon as he had the authority, ordered the state troops south. Bliss did not think that in the times of high prosperity many men would enlist under the new law. Very few did.

We might have preparedness parades, hold great preparedness meetings, summon the business men of the country in an Advisory Commission to co-operate with the new Council of National Defense, but there was disinclination to take a dollar a day for patrolling the hot valley of the Rio Grande or the stretches of hot sand of Arizona and New Mexico, when Mexico was our real patriotic problem of the moment.

Bliss would hasten the prompt movement of the Guard to the border, and worked out the plan for their dispatch. "Any place on the border is better than remaining for an indefinite time at their mobilization camps."¹

Pershing, having scattered Villa's band, was bidden to stand fast in camp. His communications were in danger, he must be reinforced. Carranza, after President Wilson's recognition of his government as *de facto*, turned controversial if not hostile. The other chieftains, each holding his own fief against his rivals, were against us. There were threatening movements along the border. It appeared that our policy had failed; the Guard would arrive too late to enforce it, and to find that we were at war. German propaganda had organized a powerful, widespread and subtle anti-American campaign to influence the Mexican leaders. If we had to send an army of pacification to Mexico, that would divert our attention and our force from joining the Allies.

Pershing's request to take the city of Chihuahua before he received reinforcements was refused. He and his men bore themselves in face of continual baiting with the patience which is the supreme test of discipline. The valorous and spirited Frederick Funston was now in command of the Southern Department. He had endured inaction at Vera Cruz before that of the border; he longed to get the jump on the enemy.

"The plan outlined by General Funston in his No. 1787," Bliss wrote, "indicates a desire to begin fighting at the earliest possible moment and to capture *something, some place, anything*, without

¹ Memorandum, June 22, 1916.

any clearly expressed idea as to what the ultimate object is.¹ I am led to believe from conversations with the Secretary of War that the administration has a very definite policy."

Pershing was in a position to strike either right or left within Mexican territory; he must be supported if in danger; and in case we had to advance, then as soon as the Guard and the few regular reinforcements we could summon had arrived, we could if necessary send in two converging columns, one from Nogales and the other from Brownsville.

On July 2, Bliss, in consultation with Baker, prepared a telegram to Funston in elucidation of that very definite policy. It hoped "by the proposed concentration of our troops with the minimum of fighting, or without any at all, to force the Mexicans, if practicable, to evacuate the widest possible strip of their territory from the border south." This would insure no further raids and necessary pursuits. "But the Secretary of War orders that no general movement across the border will be made until specific instructions are given by him. This must be clearly understood. In case of actual conflict brought on by Mexican aggression you may occupy and protect all international bridges. You may occupy the Mexican towns immediately adjacent to our border where necessary to protect our side of the line."

Secretary Baker had long since discovered Bliss and sounded the depth of his wisdom in the course of the Mexican crisis. Their minds were immediately in tune. Baker, too, was a student of history. He could understand the Bliss who turned from Mexican problems to write to a correspondent:

"To study the world's history by studying merely the parallel histories of artificial states is to study from viewpoints which are constantly shifting. The only permanent elements upon which history can be based are those great human families which have peopled the globe, pushing forward the limits of civilized or occupied territory and at the same time making their imprint on the parts of the globe occupied by them. Today we are witnessing the artificial barriers of a large part of the world removed or shifting as the strengths of the families of the peoples in contact vary at the different points of contact.

"In studying history on a universal basis the student is properly grounded. He is able to coördinate correctly the work of mankind and

¹ Memorandum, June 16, 1916.

to understand the relative development which has taken place in each great family of the human race. Races may be antagonistic or they may be disposed to live side by side in peace. To those who look forward to a time of universal peace the study of history from a universal standpoint should be particularly attractive, for the ultimate consummation of such an idea means that all artificial barriers of states must disappear and that the world must be viewed as one state composed of the races of mankind so grouped as to live together in peace and harmony.”¹

The meeting of the Root and Bliss minds, after the Spanish War, had given Major Bliss his opportunity, and the meeting of the Baker and Bliss minds broadened General Bliss' opportunity. Root took him up to the crest of one range and set him on his way when he was forty-six, and Baker took him to the crest of another range when he was sixty-two and set him on his way in the midst of a civilized world in savage riot.

Baker set all Bliss' faculties in a glow in which affection was the warp to the woof of their close official relations. Until 1916, and more especially 1917 and 1918, after we were in the World War, Bliss' papers often give the impression that while one part of his mind was occupied by his faithful performance of official duties, the other parts were veiled to his associates. In Baker he had a chief with a mind as inherently active as his own from bedtime to waking after a brief sleep; in Baker a conversationalist who found rest from official duties by turning to a discussion of any subject within the orbit of human interests. The day's work over, they could talk for talk's sake and to add to their general information.

On July 7, 1916, when any hour might bring the word of the outbreak of fighting which would wreck the administration's peace policy, Baker sent Bliss to the border, because "Bliss sees with my own eyes." Aside from his other qualifications for this mission, Bliss had the basic essential that his judgment would be utterly alien to the influence of the appeal that, in case of war, he might so shape events in favor of his own fortunes that one day he would be in command of an army of occupation in Mexico and look down as governor general from the ancient seat of power on Chapultepec upon Mexico City. Bliss took it for granted that Funston would command in the field unless Scott was sent.

¹ Letter to Irving C. Scott, June 9, 1916.

Bliss the soldier—going from camp to camp, from post to post, headquarters to headquarters of regulars that wanted action if only for the relief of boredom, of guardsmen who had reason to be more restless than the regulars—would make sure that we were ready for any military emergency; that Pershing had sufficient supplies, that the soldiers did not lack facilities for relaxation which would keep them from becoming fractious, and that their health was safeguarded.

As the keeper of the peace on that border where such contrasting racial civilizations met he would insure provision that the military emergency should not occur to give his fellow-soldiers a chance to hasten what they thought was the inevitable, and what the nation feared was the inevitable. As the listener he met Mexican chieftains and their agents, whose sensibilities and vanity, in face of the northern threat, were factors in their ingenuous and prolonged palavers. He had to cool hot heads on both sides of the border. Some of our commanders had a taste of his messianic finality as he laid down the law and of his hot outbursts as soldier to soldier; and some of the Mexican chiefs, who put on a bold and truculent front, had the brutal facts of their own military weakness revealed to them in Spanish maxims they could understand. At the same time he took care to weaken German propaganda rather than to give it support by our attitude.

While Bliss acted as instructor in our policy he held up the mirror in third person detachment to enable his chief to see the situation in the large and in illuminating detail. And to the world he was the Assistant Chief of Staff on an inspection tour.

It did not interest him what part he had in the success of the peace policy. It was enough for it to prevail.

The military emergency did not occur. We did not have to cross the border. German propaganda was balked. Through the torrid heat of the Mexican summer and on into the late fall Pershing held his position and the soldiers continued their patrols, their lot forgotten by our public after the July crisis passed, as we turned our attention to the Presidential election and back to the World War which day by day was drawing us closer into its toils.

Bliss became the obvious choice to represent the War Department in the parleys with the Mexican Commissioners at Atlantic City to

establish a secure basis for Pershing's withdrawal and that of our forces on the border and resumption of normal relations between the two countries. There he was associated with the venerable Judge Gray of Delaware and with Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, as civil commissioners. Judge Gray took Bliss' measure at once; and Lane eventually found that in him he had a colleague who did not take what is called the narrow, provocative soldier's view, but knew his subject to the depths. Bliss kept free from political policy, but he understood political implications.

He saved his colleagues, who were unfamiliar with Mexican methods, from many pitfalls. He opposed a suggested plan of American and Mexican military coöperation in guarding the border and in Pershing's withdrawal as being bound to invite friction and more trouble, for no one Mexican commander controlled all northern Mexico. He wrote to Scott that "the only safe thing for either government is to stand squarely on the international obligation to hold its own bad men in check and, at the same time, for each side so to dispose its military forces as to enable it to punish most effectively bad men who may slip over from the other side."

After all our soldiers had endured and all that Mexico had suffered from the broils of its chieftains, he sought a permanent instead of a patchwork peace. Pershing's force was withdrawn without any unpleasant incident and, finally, in February, 1917, only two months before our entry into the World War, the guardsmen were brought home. This put the seal on the end of the Mexican danger. Since the public sees fighting as the soldier's business, there had been no glory for Pershing, none for the patrols and certainly none for Bliss in his greatest service yet as the nation's unadvertised counselor. People have no visual proof of a soldier's statesmanship in preventing wars, as they have of his military achievement in the march past of his victorious veterans after a war which possibly might have been prevented.

If American troops had had to cross the border in force then we should have doubtless had to keep on advancing in subduing guerrillas in the course of pacification until we had taken the Mexican capital. Then the Mexican people would have been embittered against us. Other Latin-American nations would have accepted our occupation of Mexico as confirming their view that our national

policy meant imperialistic expansion at their expense, thus alienating them from support of the Allied cause. German propaganda would have warned all the weaker peoples that our action in Mexico represented our true purpose in contrast with our public talk about rescuing the world from the Prussian war lords in the name of democracy and the self-determination of peoples. So no biography of Bliss is complete without attention to this forgotten crisis.

XII

PATIENT SUBORDINATION

WE come to the period in which Bliss' counsel had the most direct effect upon all our lives. Our neglect of this period in general has the aspect of a loss of national historical consciousness. We have been inclined to hold up the back of the mirror to ourselves. Some of our historians have taken such care not to appear parochial that they have largely disregarded our own very important influence in the World War before as well as after we became a combatant. They have ranged foreign fields, which were already well explored, with too little attention to the treasure chest of our own archives.

This particularly applies to those who were not interested in the fighting but in the origins and conflicts of policies. Admittedly our casualties were small in comparison with those of the major Allies. However, the courtship of our power, long before our entry into the war, had become a vital factor in shaping the policies of both groups of belligerents. They painstakingly scrutinized and measured the fluctuations of our moods and the play of our home politics. With skillful and adaptive variety they flattered our national vanity. Our disillusionments, after our entry, through the succeeding honeymoon, marital troubles and informal separation, if not official divorce, may have led to our own forgetfulness of our frantic and gigantic national effort.

In debating the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare in relation to whether it would bring war with the United States, Germany had to answer the question of whether the Teutonic powers, if we did go to war, could win the day before our military potentialities became effective.¹ After the declaration, outrages on our shipping would inevitably stir up public anger to the breaking point and sooner or later we should take up arms. The later, the better it appeared to Germany, but this judgment was subject to the depth of our conviction when we declared war and with what military energy and force we should prosecute it. President Wilson would

¹ Bethmann-Hollweg to Bernstorff, January 16, 1917.

have our conviction complete before the decisive step, and this was the mood of the Congress.

Professional soldiers, who cut through the public propaganda to cruel and sanguinary realities, saw that the campaign of 1916 had left the odds decidedly in favor of the Teutonic powers on land, with Allied sea control seriously endangered. Whether we should send an army to France or not, expend lives by tens or by thousands, the professional execution of our military policy and the direction of the raising and equipping and training of an army would be with the little staff group under Scott and Bliss. To put it clearly and briefly, we should give our youth into their hands.

In this process an unknown young American staff officer, no more than a major in rank, might exert far greater personal power over his countrymen than one in key rank in one of the army hosts of continental Europe. The European military machines were the product of forty years of organization and regimentation since conscription had become universal in Europe. Their leaders had the drivers' seats over forces which were literally bred in military tradition and team play, and which were accepted as institutions in peace no less than police or sanitary forces or associations of employers or employees.

Our little group, under a civilian chief as Secretary of War, must create its machine, officers, men and material, out of the raw and then pit it against a machine which had had forty years of peace preparation, a machine which had fathered and developed the hideous complexity of modern warfare; and this after that machine had had two years' experience in action, steel grinding on steel, wit on wit in a bloody mire, in battle with another great war machine, in which the lesson of the present month antedated the tactics of the previous month.

In considering our military potentialities, aside from our numbers and our industrial and transport resources, the Germans had in mind our Spanish War chaos against an inferior foe near our doors, and our present small force of regulars and militia. They were alive to our racial prejudices inherited from nations on both sides of the war as a disturbing factor to national military unity and determination. A Kaiser, a Hindenburg or a Ludendorff, in his warranted majesty as an expert in the supremely technical business of mass

killing—as he looked across the Atlantic at a controversial Congress, a professor in the White House, a former civil official as a Secretary of War, and Scott, Bliss or Pershing, with no experience in large commands—might well conclude that the German army would have no more serious task than that of mob suppression in dealing with any American army which should reach the shores of France through the submarine zone.¹

The author has already published a work on our achievement under Secretary Baker, which serves as a background for a biography of Bliss. Later, when Bliss became the American representative on the Supreme War Council, his letters to Baker were reportorial classics from subordinate to chief. His memoranda and letters while he was Chief of Staff shed further light on the general subject of home preparation, which yield us some surprises and clarifies some cloudy points; but his written legacy during the ordeal of preparation is relatively meager, since his office was only two doors away from Baker's, before Scott's departure for Russia, and one door later, and Baker could summon him at any time. Their verbal conferences were unrecorded.

With singular adroitness Baker did what might be done for preparedness before our entry into the war under restrictions in which the Presidential policy of patience was only one factor. Baker had a gift in winning the President's favor to any quiet forward step of prevision. A chess player, himself, the War College games interested him, and he convinced the President they were not unneutral unless openly directed against Germany.²

A memorandum by Bliss about a detail is potently illustrative of one of the difficulties. We had a small military mission in Paris, which sought to keep professionally abreast of the military situation and the latest developments in tactics and weapons. It required real juggling of War Department finances, at a time when the Congress had delayed the annual military appropriation, to get an allotment of a few hundred dollars which the mission needed for its work; but the mission would have to get on without an additional stenog-

¹ *Ludendorff's Own Story*. Ludendorff, I, 374-376.

² *Newton D. Baker: America at War*. Palmer, I, 37.

rapher whom we could not afford to send to France.

The dollar-a-year men of the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense, after they had become familiar with government methods of the time, could understand that the instance was not unusual. Just what were they to prepare for? Vaguely national defense was against an invasion which they might secretly conclude would be made by the German army after the destruction of the British navy and the taking of London and Paris. It could not be against the Allies when the large majority of our people were now calling for war on their side.

Business men, when they decided for a project, were accustomed to issue bonds, borrow from banks or draw on reserve funds to finance it. They had architects draw up plans and specifications for contractors, ordered material and proceeded with construction. Now they were adrift in conferences without the premise of any of these normal essentials in civil enterprises. The best they could do was to list firms and their capacities for making war supplies when the Congress should unloose the purse-strings.

They got little satisfaction in asking the professional soldiers for more definite information as to what they were to provide. As every day brought the inevitable nearer, the professional soldiers were in worse plight than the civil warmakers, when the Congress had not provided the funds for administrative routine and it was difficult to get requisitions for blue-prints honored.

Indeed, outside of professional military circles, only Americans thinking in terms of adventure and passionate loyalty to the Allies of which they would give active proof, considered the possibility of our having to send an army to France. The propaganda of the Allies to bring us into the war did not include the whisper of such an intimation. It gave the impression that our financial and economic aid and the moral effect of our weight in the balance would win the day.

The Congress had limited the number of general staff officers on duty in Washington to twenty-seven. This seemed to the Congress more than enough to be occupied in wasted war studies while they enjoyed life in the capital. It is a fair statement of the situation to say that twenty-seven was as inadequate a number for the going concern of a European army of the size which we were to

train and command as one-fifth of the normal teaching or executive force for a great university or industrial corporation which had long been established.

Not only this, but in the National Defense Act of 1916 there was a clause which might be construed as restoring the old bureau system to much of the compartmental power it had before the Spanish War. Baker reversed the judgment of the Judge Advocate General. As the chief executive of our army effort in 1917-18, he always considered the saving of the staff as one of his most important services.¹

Moreover, in the intervening years since its creation, the staff had drifted away from the conception of Root and of Bliss, the founding President of the War College. Of this Bliss had soon become aware after his return to Washington from his service at Fort Sam Houston.

In home or foreign counsels Bliss favored mutual coöperation and understanding. He was a spokesman for teamplay. His reputation for brusqueness among some of his fellow officers had its origin partly in his tendency to make a small allowance for men who would not yield on minor points for the sake of the major.

As far back as July 10, 1916, on his way to report on the acute Mexican crisis he had written to Scott in reference to the present needs of the staff "which should have the utmost simplicity" that it had split up "into minor groups (confirming the Congressional view about its habits) which, as experience has shown, for one reason or another, had become more or less antagonistic."

He would have a small board of direction and review coördinate all functions and tie the War College division in close relations with the rest of the staff. Thus there would be unity of action on one plan, instead of devising many plans. This would secure respect from the Congress, which naturally expected unity from a group of experts. It turned out, once we were in the war, that progress and delay were frequently related to the ability of the soldier to look into the civilian mind and the civilian to look into the soldier mind in mutual understanding that must bridge a broad gulf.

In a letter written in later years when, in classic mood, Bliss looked back on his own experience, he wrote:

¹ To the author.

"The making of war plans by a general staff—the arriving at the sound opinion of an army through the medium of its general staff—all that is one thing; quite a different thing is the idea that the function of command, high or low, is obsolescent—that a staff is to absorb it all—because that is little less than sovietising an army. Sound training should teach the proper place and part of each function. The ancient fable, in profane and sacred story, of the quarrel between the organs of the human body is perennially instructive. As Livy tells the story the stomach says to each of the others 'I am greater than thou.' Whereupon all the others strike. The hand refuses to convey food to the mouth, the mouth to receive it, the teeth to chew it, the throat to swallow it. The emaciation of approaching death brings them to their senses. In an army, when the functions of command lose their proper place, the work of a general staff loses its co-ordination and the machine 'runs wild.' In such a case, the principal lesson of war will be found in the answer to the question 'Whose fault was it?'¹

With the turn of the year from 1916 to 1917, Brigadier General Joseph E. Kuhn, who had been our military attaché in Germany, became head of the War College. In bringing his observation of the war to bear in reorganization he was hampered by the old restrictions of meager personnel and lack of funds.

¹ To Major General E. F. McGlachlin, December 14, 1921.

XIII

LOGIC WITHOUT ILLUSIONS

MEANWHILE through the months preceding our entry into the war peace routine continued. We may turn to some of Bliss' views which had to do with army discipline and ethics.

"It goes against my grain to recommend that an officer be ordered before a retiring board with a view to his being placed on the retired list, which ought to be a roll of honor, for sheer incapacity and unfitness as reported in this case. The Adjutant General states that this officer should be retired 'by reason of an infirmity of discretion, judgment and decision which makes the reasonable fulfillment of his military duties impossible for him, notwithstanding an honest desire and firm purpose on his part to fully discharge them.'

"This is a contradiction in terms which I do not understand. A firm purpose to discharge one's duties is shown by trying one's best to discharge them. In this case his commanding officer says that he has failed to properly supervise the instruction, training, supply, equipment, and administration of his command. An officer of whom this could be said should have been brought to trial by court-martial. This officer has been allowed to remain on the active list for over forty years. He can retire now on his own application without officially and ostentatiously discrediting the retired list by having it appear that he was retired for mere unfitness. I recommend that he be informed that his application for retirement will be immediately approved. If he shows a 'firm purpose' to remain on the active list, then I recommend that General Funston be directed to place him under a proper disciplinarian with instruction to bring him to trial whenever such facts can be alleged against him as herein done by Colonel Glenn."¹

Bliss was thrifty about the spending of government money if not about his own when he wanted a book. He became indignant over "the annually recurring scandal in the appropriation for mileage to which the attention of the Secretary of War is especially invited. . . .

"We make no distinction between journeys which are desirable but not necessary; between those which are permissible under the law, but

¹ Memorandum by Bliss to Scott (Chief of Staff) January 9, 1917.

not mandatory; and, finally, between the foregoing and those which are mandatory under the law. We change the stations of many officers because it is a pleasing thing to do so and very agreeable to them, although we know beforehand it cannot be done and leave money enough to effect the changes that are mandatory under the law.

"Staff officers of ability and long experience are stationed at distant places from which perhaps they submit plans calling for the expenditure of public funds. A doubt arises in Washington in regard to some such plan and not infrequently it is held that the only way to resolve the doubt is to send an officer from Washington to that place to see for himself. It is believed that much of this travel is unnecessary."¹

This might have saved some money to pay for military information from abroad or for blue-prints of practical war plans, but it did not serve to make Bliss popular with some of his fellow officers who were not averse to breaking the monotony of office routine by a journey. If Bliss had taken more interest in being popular he might have been better known. It frequently disturbed his colleagues that such a good story teller off duty could be such a rigid fellow officially.

With the public clamor in the fatalism of a Greek chorus driving us into Armageddon, and the Congress still providing no funds while the President clung to his hope for a peaceful solution. The indignation of the forwards grew over the inactivity of the War Department, which was seen as doing nothing when its business was to prepare for war, while a supposedly incorrigible pacifist sat at the desk of the Secretary of War and the professional force spun red-tape. Few men might be enlisting to fill up the increments allowed for the regulars and state forces, but the urgent, who took our entry into the war for granted, had put on their military boots and were volunteering freely as spursmen. After we broke off relations with Germany, February 3, the waves of suggestions, which later became an inundation, began lapping the War Department. The staff became a reception committee which was precluded from being receptive.

The human weakness of all who would start early to do their bit in civil preparation naturally called for some official recognition. These included many who were interested in some kind of welfare service for the soldiers before we were in the war and had an army

¹ Bliss to Scott, February 1, 1917.

to be kind to, and when no army officer might say that we were going to war, and therefore we must have soldiers. Bliss wrote:

"You say that the writer of this letter, from which you enclosed an extract to me, is one who has had much experience in connection with 'free canteens' at R. R. stations in England and that this experience proved that such canteens were of the greatest benefit to the soldiers. I should not, myself, want anything more than such experience to indicate what would be a satisfactory course to follow in time of war. It was just what was done at many places along the railroads in the recent movement of our militia troops to and from the border. I do not know that the people who did this talked much about it; they just went ahead and did it. I think it goes without saying that such a thing will be beneficial for troops moving along the railroads."¹

Bliss added that he was very busy, as all in the War Department were (in previsionary preparations without further warrant or funds after Germany had been gaining time by flirting with President Wilson's peace proposals, which were abruptly rejected upon the application of unrestricted submarine warfare).²

The old Congress, which had been elected in 1914, was in the last days of its session in face of the great crisis of the second month of 1917. It did not accept the breaking off of relations with Germany as an irretrievable step toward war. The opinion largely prevailed that it carried a threat which would make Germany hesitate and conclude she could not risk the open hostilities with our enormous power. Germany should have time to get the repercussions of our growing public anger and determination in influencing her to adopt a more considerate policy.

After we broke off relations with Germany Secretary Baker had confidentially bidden the War College to prepare a plan for not fewer than a million men. In their peace preparations for war the European staffs knew on what terrain they were to fight, its distance from home bases and all details necessary to concrete preparation. But this would be decided for us after we had the army.

The old Congress, marking time in discussion as its swan song, passed on responsibility to its successor which had been elected in November, 1916, and normally would not meet until December 1,

¹ Letter to Henry L. Harris, February 26, 1917.

² Bernstorff to House, January 31, 1917.

1917. When the old Congress died, March 4, without appropriation for even routine running expenses for the army, the President, March 9, summoned the new Congress to assemble, April 19, in order to provide them.

Still Germany proceeded with her submarine warfare, mindless of the suggestion that the new Congress might have more serious business to conduct; and she gave no encouragement to the last hope when the President advanced the call for the meeting of the new Congress to April 2. By the middle of March no one, who had any knowledge of the movements of great public passion through personal experience or historical reading, might doubt the certainty of the event for which we were preparing ourselves in spirit if not in force.

The inundation of the War Department had begun in earnest. All roads for those who would have their bit assigned led to Washington. The Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense met frequently. Without funds we were making the gestures of preparation with closed fists in the quandary of "What can I do?" and urgent appeals of "Tell me what to do!" The War Department was expected to answer the question and give the directions.

Without depending upon human memories, when events came so thick and fast that retention of them was difficult, we do have in Bliss' official memoranda a record of foresight as an adviser which entitles him to honor as a prophet in his own country. Again and again vital policies in the conduct of the war may be traced to his suggestions. These may be technical reading for others, but they have a special interest, which cannot be disregarded, for all officers and men who were to be suddenly changed from civilians into soldiers.

The professional soldier side of Bliss, for which his country had trained him, was now uppermost. It was that of the practical expert in military science, in armed force. Weak as our army staff was in numbers and in experience, subject to failures of scholastic excellence in a war test, it was the only one we had. If we had had none, the confusion which was trying enough to all concerned, would have been greater than in the Spanish War, in ratio to the magnitude of our task in 1917-18.

The additional burden of peace red tape, once we were in action,

lay heavy on Bliss' mind. He would cut it as one of the first items of preparation which required no funds.¹ He would stop "all formal reports and papers of any kind where the information therein is not necessary for preservation." But as only six out of seventy-five commanding officers agreed with him, this change had to wait.

"In view of the great increase of business now to be expected . . . so much of the general business is made to center in the office of the Chief of Staff that delay here means delay in the business of the entire department."²

Papers written "under the direction of the Secretary of War" about details that might have been settled days before had to wait on the formal signature of the busy Secretary, who had to accept the decision of the subordinate or he would have no time to study questions of major policy.

Four thousand papers were already leaving the Adjutant General's office every day.

"Suppose that he gave an average of one minute to each paper. Suppose that he were to close the door of his office, deny access to anyone except to his officers bringing him papers and that he sat at his desk for eight consecutive hours each day in the year. Suppose all that,—*yet he could scrutinize only 480 papers a day out of more than 4000.* And then he would know nothing about the 480.

"In the office of the Chief of Staff there are approximately about 175 papers (before our actual entry into the war) to be handled each day, including those which may have to pass to and from the desk of the Chief of Staff two or three or more times.

"If the Chief of Staff were to lock his door and sit at his desk for three consecutive hours, he could give only one minute on an average, to each of the 175 papers. Many of them require many minutes, some of them hours, for reasonable consideration. It would require him to sit at his desk *eight consecutive hours and forty-five minutes*, seeing no one except the person bringing him papers, to give an average of *three minutes* to each paper.

"In such a case the head of any big business must be guided by the judgment of others. If not, sooner or later, he must himself study the details of each question, which is a physical impossibility.

"Is it not wiser to confine one's personal responsibility to that business which one can personally attend to, and hold responsible in other matters

¹ Bliss to Scott, April 5, 1917.

² Ibid.

the person on whose judgment reliance is placed? The one who is responsible for an opinion is the one who makes himself responsible for it by accepting it and taking action on it. It is not impossible that opinions may sometimes be given that would not be given were the person who gave them responsible for the action based on them."

He had put himself on record in a memorandum which he had exploded at the foot of the ancient institutional mountain which he knew could not be moved yet. Baker might be against red tape, he might share the concern of his chief advisers that he had to meet so many people and sign so many papers that he had little time in which to think; but that governmental tradition of shifting decisions about detail to higher rank, that "passing of the buck," which often wagged a paper along its slow course with its tail of endorsements, was to persist through the early months after our entry into the war—and even against Pershing's sword slashes in clearing his path to the enemy.

We proceed with Bliss' memoranda. With promotion already beckoning to officers of the army from the prospective war expansion of personnel, he refused to approve a plan for promoting at once nine hundred regular officers by name and in the order proposed.¹ This would only make more confusion. "The first thing that would be done in practice would be to violate the plan. I do not think that the discretion of the President and Secretary of War should be bound by the cast-iron rule of promotion proposed."

Requests were already coming in from regular officers or through governors for assignment with higher rank to volunteer forces.

"When the emergency comes it may be that this captain can be least of all spared," Bliss wrote, "or it may be that his services will be more needed with troops from another State than the one he now asks to serve with, or in a different arm, or in the staff rather than in the line. Nevertheless, the approval of his request by the War Department commits the latter to granting his assignment at the request of a Governor of a State, whether it should be advisable to do so or not. . . . I recommend that this and similar requests be disapproved; that the writer be informed that his application is filed with the War Department and permission to transmit it to the Governor of Connecticut is denied."²

¹ Bliss to Scott, April 3, 1917.

² Bliss to Scott, March 10, 1917.

We must have the plan for raising an army settled before we proceed to make rules conceived to apply to contradictory and unaccepted plans. Bliss continued to urge a concrete plan by the military experts for submission to Congress.¹

"The essential thing to note is that in any admittedly imperfect plan (from the purely military point of view) there are varying degrees of imperfection; and that, if we give no aid to the Congress, it may adopt the most imperfect plan, whereas had it known it it might have as readily adopted the least imperfect one."

How to convince perfectionists, military or pacifist, that there was no such thing as perfection was always one of Bliss' tutelary problems. Nothing could be so wasteful of time in the preparations for war, which must deal swiftly with the unexpected, as delay owing to search for perfection or discussions as to just what constituted perfection. The scholar disapproved this scholastic tendency of military theorists who waged paper wars with the armies of their dreams.

In the vague harassing situation, while waiting for the new Congress to assemble, Bliss strove for the concrete things which must be done on the basis that we must raise an army and that army would have to be fed, clothed, housed and armed. He had long been convinced that this army would have to serve abroad to win the decision against Germany. Two weeks before we declared war he sought this information from the Quartermaster General:

"1. Have working drawings been prepared, and blue-printed in ample number, for the construction of the simplest form of frame cantonment buildings sanitary and comfortable such as would be needed to shelter raw troops at regimental, brigade or division training points?

"2. Can these blue prints, with bills of material, be at once (meaning by that, today) placed in sufficient numbers in the hands of Department Commanders (if not already done) so that their quartermasters may familiarize themselves with them, study the resources of local markets in the Department for the supply of the material, and in general be prepared to adapt the plans to particular sites as rapidly as the latter are determined?

"3. Has the Quartermaster General lists of firms on which we must rely for the large part of the bills of material which cannot be supplied

¹ Bliss to The War College Division, March 24, 1917.

locally,—for lumber, iron piping, patent roofing, etc.?

"4. Has the Quartermaster General prepared, ready for immediate sending at a moment's notice, all telegraphic orders giving the exact quantities of various materials that we know would be needed; to be followed by letters also now prepared?

"5. Can the War Department, without committing itself financially, open communication with probable large contractors and tell them *now* what the War Department will immediately order if the necessity arises?

"6. Are there any contractors, of this fiscal year, for clothing, tentage, and equipment and supplies generally, who, for lack of appropriations, have not been called on for delivery up to the limit permitted by their contracts? If so, is the Quartermaster General prepared at a moment's notice to wire the necessary orders? Can he properly tell them in advance that such orders may be sent them at any moment?

"7. If large numbers of men have to be trained before they can be equipped with regulation uniforms, etc., is the Quartermaster General prepared to at once recommend some kind of comfortable uniform clothing, from hat to shoes, which can be purchased commercially in quantities sufficient for, say, 500,000 men?"¹

The word "properly" encountered the restrictions which still applied. Five days later Bliss began a memorandum with a discreet official,

"It is possible that in the near future the War Department may be placing huge orders for supplies of all kinds needed in the military service. It will sometimes happen that material of a certain kind will be required in different classes of articles supplied by the different purchasing departments of the War Department. Two departments may require great quantities of leather, or of woolen cloth, or of canvas. If the matter is not properly coördinated it may result that one bureau of the War Department requiring great quantities of such material will find that the manufacturers supplying it have tied themselves up for a long time in contracts with another bureau of the War Department.

"I think that this matter should be brought to the attention of bureau chiefs with the view to their arranging some sort of a 'steering committee' among themselves to insure an orderly and uniform acquisition of supplies."²

In view of the later conflict of overlapping orders and the troubles over priority, it was clear that the lecturer on military science, who

¹ Bliss to Scott, March 21, 1917.

² Bliss to Scott, March 29, 1917.

had studied European and our Civil War army systems and the errors of the Spanish War, had not forgotten his lessons.

On April 2, four days before our entry into the war, Bliss had word from Quartermaster General Henry G. Sharpe that, including the regular army and National Guard, five hundred thousand men could be equipped by July 31, 1917, and their equipment could be maintained.¹ "An additional 500,000 men can be equipped by December 31, 1917, *provided* the orders are given *now*." The orders could not be given before we were at war, no increase of forces authorized, and the annual routine appropriations for peace not yet passed. But the Quartermaster General Sharpe had already violated the law by committing himself to some initial orders with Baker's approval.

Bliss took little interest in the rearrangement of territorial army departments before our entry. "The very first problem we have to solve," he wrote, "is the raising, organizing and equipping of a sufficient force to do anything with."² But he would also look ahead to the means of getting this army to Europe and earnestly suggested that precautions be taken against sabotage of the German ships interned in our ports.³

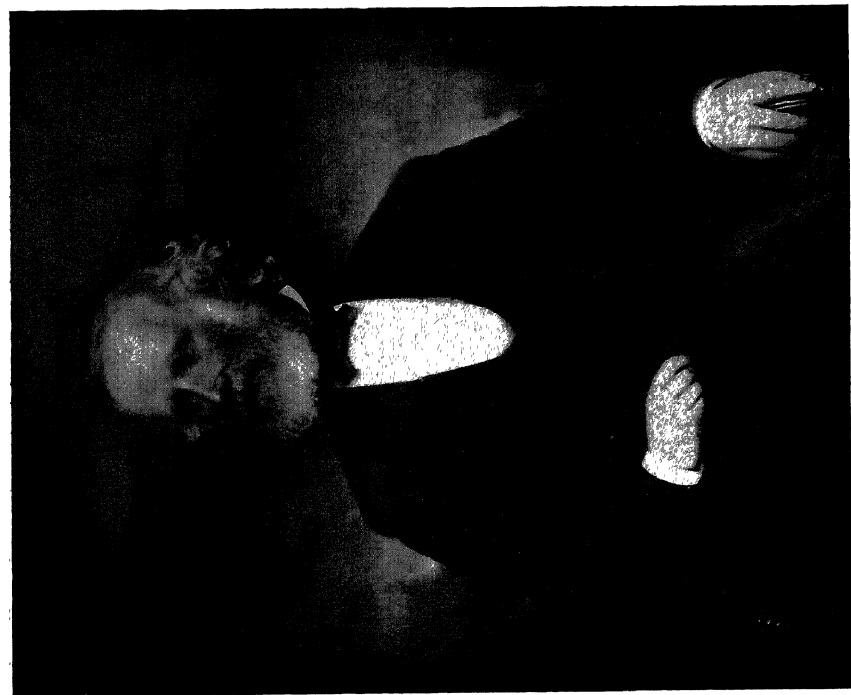
It would take longer to build ships than to make the army. The army would be helpless when it was ready if it had not sea transport. Months before public attention centered in the drive for a "bridge to France" he asked the War College experts to make a study of this question,

"How long would it require to transport 500,000 troops, infantry, cavalry, artillery, auxiliary arms, horses, guns, ammunition, etc., from the United States to, say, the port of Havre, France? We could assume that for this purpose all of the present interned German vessels could be put in order and used. Also, whatever other shipping of our own or that we might charter from abroad that could be found available, but I think that it ought also to be assumed that we can not afford to divert any shipping which is now needed for the necessary trade of the United States including the shipment of supplies of all kinds that we are sending to the Allies. The foregoing being worked out, how much tonnage must be set apart for constant service in transportation of supplies of

¹ Bliss to Scott, April 2, 1917.

² Bliss to Scott, March 27, 1917.

³ Bliss to Scott, March 31, 1917.



BLISS' FATHER AND MOTHER

all kinds for this force of ours in Europe, for bringing back sick and wounded, etc.?"¹

In answer the college said it had previously made a study of landing an American army in Macedonia, to operate on the enemy flank, which is interesting in view of Bliss' attitude on the Supreme War Council toward the diversion of any of our forces to Macedonia or elsewhere from the western front. The college also had just made a study of a landing in Holland, probably in response to the talk of the time that Holland might be drawn into the war by unrestricted submarine warfare. The college strongly opposed sending regular units with their full complement of regular officers abroad, since many would be needed for home training, or any piecemeal reinforcement of the Allies. We should have at least five hundred thousand men ready before we began our movement. Our theater of operation must depend upon counsel with the Allies after our entry, and based on the understanding that for the two years required for our effective preparation (which would have brought the date set to March, 1919) the Allies must expect only naval and economic aid from us. It was estimated that for each hundred thousand men abroad we must have seven hundred thousand tons of shipping, or three million five hundred thousand tons for five hundred thousand. Not enough for an hundred thousand was in sight.² Such was the outlook for Secretary Baker and his little group of advisers less than a week before the Congress declared war.

On the day of the declaration of war, Bliss wrote to a friend in answer to a question:

"For years I have advocated raising the strength of an infantry company to 250 men. I have never seen any reason that convinces me that American officers cannot train American men in companies of that size as easily as they do in Europe. If we could organize our infantry companies in that way it would increase our total regular army at war strength to the vicinity of 375,000 men. However, the beginning of a war is a bad time to effect a radical reorganization. I suspect that whatever we begin with we will have to carry through to the end."³

Bliss was only ahead of the event in this as in many other matters. When Pershing's authority as field commander backed the re-

¹ Bliss to Kuhn, March 27, 1917.

² Bliss to Scott, March 31, 1917.

³ To Judge George Gray, March 31, 1917.

quest for large companies, after his study of European armies, we hastened to change our organization, at the cost of a good deal of trouble, which might have been avoided if we had accepted the modern idea at the start.

XIV

AGE FOR WISDOM

ON the day they voted for war there had been no change in the view of members of the Congress, which was warranted in a strictly literal sense by the attitude of the Allies before our entry, that only our financial and economic aid was required to win the day for the Allies. The pilots of the War Department might hope for favoring winds but must be prepared for hurricanes on uncharted seas. They alone could realize their responsibilities and the range of possibilities in an uncertain future. They had no illusions that their provision could be sufficiently equal to the event to win public approval.

If we should not have to send soldiers to France, then our army of a million, breaking camp without action, would appear as a grand and costly gesture. To make preparations only for the gesture might lead to a Boabdillian fiasco, to shame and humiliation, should the million have to turn the gestures to blows and need another million for their support.

Success or failure in the formation and execution of a plan depended largely upon the kind of Secretary of War, Chief and Assistant Chief of Staff we had, and then upon the kind of man we had as commander in the field if we sent an army to France. Public impatience might prevent a sound and thorough plan; it might handicap the prompt results which the public expected from any plan. Application and energy were not enough; there must be courage in following any sound and thorough plan through.

Baker was the keystone of the arch which spanned the gulf between the small professional military world, under such sudden expansion, and the huge civil world in its tumult of energy in unfamiliar channels. His approach to his task became supremely important in the example it set for his advisers and all men called to the colors.

It was clear at once that his philosophy and temperament assured the instinctive practice of the good intention of being the Secretary

of War of the whole, uninfluenced by his association with the political party then in power. The military experts for that whole were the professional soldiers we had paid and trained for such an emergency as was now upon us. Their respect for him through the past year had risen to devotion. He would have the crystallization of their best thought direct professional policy; he would secure teamplay out of their zeal, their professional and human jealousies in their day of power and promotion.

But the door of their professional cloisters must be opened to the advice of the men who supplied the sinews of war, who cared for the welfare of the soldiers and who were, in turn, experts in their worlds. These, too, in their ambitions and jealousies, and their contradictions of ideas and methods must be brought into teamplay. Beyond that was the teamplay of the whole to prevent waste motion and direct confusion away from the chaos that seemed inevitable. The pioneer chief of staff of civil production was Frank A. Scott, Chairman of the Munitions Standards Board.

Yet all this was only a conception as a guide in the ordeal of execution. How far did Baker measure up to his task? And how far did the two Scotts and Bliss measure up to theirs? It might also be asked, when the business was war and war is fighting, how much of the real fighting spirit was in the natures of Baker and his Chief and Assistant Chief of Staff? War had been abhorrent to Baker. He had been denounced as a pacifist when he was appointed. Scott had seen frontier fighting, but he had been best known as a comrade and peacemaker among the Indians. Bliss had won his star on a peace detail and since then his greatest contribution had been in keeping the peace with Mexico. It took time to prove that Baker, once he had to make war, would be a stern warrior.

That old maxim youth for war and action was heard among the restive besieging the War Department. It appealed to popular imagination and to the younger men of the army while the elders could point to the age of the first von Moltke and to Joffre and Hindenburg. Scott and Bliss were sixty-three. They would retire in a few months under our army law which sets an age limit for efficiency in command, high or low, assuring the march's end this side of dotage. Why, under the weight of years, which fitted them to sit rather than to spring into the double-quick, should Scott and Bliss

be retained in power in this emergency? When public impatience should break in a storm, as it was bound to, after we had been six months in the war and our army was not yet advancing victoriously to the Rhine, it might be said that nothing else could have been expected from having given professional preparations in charge of these two ancients.

At forty-six Baker, himself, might naturally turn to younger aides when the slow pacing of army peace routine was suddenly subjected to war pressure. But the immediate question was how far the capacities of Scott and Bliss were fitted to the hour's need, after it was decided just what was the hour's need. This was not to lead charges in France. It was not to run races. It was integrity, poise, character, prestige.

The two elders when they stood before Baker's desk had an appealing majesty. Honesty shone out of their direct glances. Both had a quality which assured him that they were not time-servers who nodded when he nodded. They were deep wells of experience. They personified all the sound traditions of the army. He knew them in intimate association in the Mexican crisis in which they had avoided many pitfalls. They would be an austere barrier against any corrupt practices, the play of political favoritism and intrigue which scandalized the conduct of the Spanish War, and which would require very subtle covering to escape detection by Bliss.

In forming our army the two would hold to the immemorial principles which had never been departed from except at the expense of disaster or waste of blood and treasure in success. Since we had to build from the ground up they would build a foundation which would bear the great load that might be imposed. Baker had complete teamplay in these two classmates whose variant characters may have explained their mutual affection. Scott, the student of the Indian sign language, had a way of expressing himself in signs; Bliss, the student of the classics, had the gift of exposition. Scott would call in subordinates and tell them what to do; Bliss would summon them in conference, listen, and then decide on policy. When Scott had a baffling problem he would turn to Bliss to work it out before he passed the word for action.

Scott's early championship of the draft earned his title as its father. He was sympathetic with the young group of officers who

were busily but covertly feeding out propaganda to the press to indoctrinate our people in favor of the draft before our entry into the war. Bliss had no doubt that the draft was the right and fair system. He was sure we would come to it under the force of circumstances if we had to make a large army. But he was cool to military propaganda in its behalf. He held that it was the business of the Congress to say how the army should be raised; the duty of officers was limited to training and commanding it.

Scott wanted to incorporate an argument for the draft in his annual report of 1916. One day he went in to Baker to state his reasons. Bliss accompanied him, and seated himself in a corner of Baker's office while Scott took the floor. Receptive as Baker was to the consideration of all suggestions, clear as Scott's points were in his own mind, Scott was not making good headway with a Secretary who did not understand the Indian sign language. The articulate Bliss stepped forward to help out his inarticulate classmate with an analysis which won the Secretary's approval for the inclusion of the expert view for public information in Scott's report.¹

Regardless of the system by which the army was raised, camps must be ready first to receive the men and officers trained in readiness to train them. Commissions would not go by political or professional favor as in the Spanish War. In applying a scientific system, which made its test in the training record of the aspirant class, group as well as political influence should have no part.

"This question has been thoroughly studied by the General Staff," Bliss wrote with reference to a proposal to establish an officers' training camp at Harvard University.

"Without a dissenting opinion, the Staff agreed upon a carefully worked out plan. This plan is thoroughly democratic and puts everyone on an even plane. Day before yesterday the Secretary of War approved this plan. It was communicated to Department Commanders and work has begun in execution of it. Yesterday the authorities of Georgetown University came to the War Department to secure a special training camp at that institution. The decision of the Secretary of War was shown to them, and they left satisfied that there would be no discrimination nor favoritism.

"The course proposed by the military instructor at Harvard is un-

¹ Major General Dennis E. Nolan to the author.

democratic and clannish. If approved it will have to be approved in many other cases, and result in many camps conducted under, in my judgment, the worst auspices for the unbiased selection of reserve officers. What is wanted is for these young men to go into the established camps where they will 'rub elbows' with the mechanics' sons and the farmers' sons.

"I consider the course proposed to be unjust to others, thoroughly undemocratic and both politically and militarily unwise."¹

On the other hand, Samuel Gompers as chief of the American Federation of Labor, speaking for another group, would have labor go to war in units under its own foremen. Mr. Gompers made a most logical argument from his premises for this system, which would assure the solidarity and the spirit of corps of tried fellowship as opposed to the undemocratic plan of turning to college men, with no experience of practical affairs, for officer material. Bliss wrote this enlightening analysis for Gompers:

"Most of us, before we stop to reason a bit about the matter, have an instinctive sympathy with Mr. Gompers' idea that a body of men engaging themselves to leave their homes on any such dangerous business as the present war should have the right to elect the men who are to lead and command them. And the strange thing is that even when we stop to reason about it and we all (including the very men in whose behalf Mr. Gompers writes) emphatically reject the idea in the case of every other dangerous occupation in life, some of us still cling to the belief that his idea is sound in the occupation which is incomparably the most dangerous of all.

"Mr. Gompers, like many of us, is led into a false analogy by not carrying his analogy far enough,—by not working it backwards as well as forwards and seeing whether he arrives at the same conclusion in either direction. He assumes a company of soldiers raised in, say, a mining town. The men are accustomed to work under certain foremen, gang bosses, etc.; they have come to have confidence in the quickness of wit of these men, their readiness in resource, their forceful character; and they are therefore the men that the soldiers of the company would naturally choose to lead and command them. It would be natural enough and proper, if the company was going to march to another town and there dig another mine such as the one they had just left. But would it be natural and proper for them thus to elect from their number a man to run the locomotive of the express train that is to take them from one town to another? Or to elect their foremen and bosses if they are suddenly, all inexperienced, told off to work in a high explosive factory?

¹ Bliss to Scott, April 19, 1917.

"Let us work the analogy in the other direction. Let us suppose that a company of soldiers, experienced in field fortification, trench warfare and all that sort of thing is, in the exigency of the war, told off to dig a coal mine. They do not know how to sink a shaft, to drive a drift, to support a tunnel, to guard against coal gases; but they want to elect a foreman because, in their previous business, he was an expert in bringing down hostile aeroplanes, a section boss because he was resourceful in leading them through wire entanglements against the enemy's trenches. Mr. Gompers would be the first to exclaim against such a thing. He would say 'I can give you men, some of whom are experts and all of whom know at least something more than these men do about digging a coal mine. If you take them they will at the least prevent some mistakes, will save some money and some lives. As the good men under them learn the business they will be promoted to take the places of those ahead of them who will fall out only too rapidly. And they will then take these places, not by a mere election, but by a common conviction that they have qualified in this particular business and not because they knew some other and quite unrelated business.'

"The condition of things desired by Mr. Gompers would have been realized before this could the democratic views of the General Staff (and, recently, the views of the entire War Department) have been put into effect. The General Staff has long held the belief that in a democracy all able-bodied men should receive a reasonable amount of military training, for the same reason that the State trains them to read and write,—in order that they may not only intelligently support their democracy by their ballots but also with equal intelligence defend it when necessary by force of their arms. But until recently the times were not ripe with us for this idea. We believed that democracy could be maintained by ballots alone, until we found ourselves in the midst of a world at war to redeem and preserve it by arms.

"Two years ago the Secretary of War presented to the people a plan which, if adopted, would have given us, even in this short time, an army of 500,000 trained citizen-soldiers with another 500,000 under training. Our arsenals would have been filled with many necessary materials of war and be rapidly filling with others. It would have been done under the schoolmastership of a regular army of less than half our present strength. It would have been done at a tithe of the cost we are now going to pay, without haste, without disruption of business, with the waste which comes with the expenditure of enormous sums in a short time,—*and with it all we would have been fairly ready when the emergency came.*

"Had the plan been carried out, a fair proportion of the young men for whom Mr. Gompers speaks would have now received military training and a fair proportion of their own number would have qualified as officers for them and for training and commanding the extra numbers who must now be called out.

"But the plan failed largely by the opposition of Congressmen who believed they were representing the opposition of this very class of men. And now we find ourselves confronted by a situation where we must train officers in order to train the men and we must take these officers from those who are willing to undergo the hard preliminary training. We intend to assign these officers, as far as practicable, to train the men from their own localities. We would have been only too glad if the class of men described on p. 2 of Mr. Gompers' letter had volunteered to receive this training. Unfortunately for all of us that class has held aloof. They are still the best men in their respective businesses to guard the interests, protect the rights and the health and the lives of the men working under them; but in the totally different business of modern war the false democracy which would at the very outset entrust to their control men equally untrained with themselves would wantonly jeopardize their health and life and with it the military success on which the preservation of real democracy depends." ¹

The scholar, who was averse to university and labor groups, was equally averse to another group plan to which he gave very extensive attention in a brief for Baker's information. He reasoned not only backwards and forwards but crosswise and through former President Theodore Roosevelt's eager, dynamic and highly appealing proposal that he should lead a volunteer division to France. If one public leader were to have this privilege, why not others, thus wrecking the idea of a homogeneous, scientific army. Bliss' arguments, as crystallized by Baker in his correspondence with Roosevelt, became a potent factor in balking the gallant Rough Rider's ambition.

Among the delegated steps which kept up a continuous ringing on the tiles of the corridor outside the Secretary's office, were those directed by the enormous local expenditures in the regions where the cantonments for the training of the soldiers were to be located. A camp corporation had been proposed, leaving the selection to the Secretary, himself, who had troubles enough without listening to all the pleas of local Congressmen and interests.

Bliss was paternally insistent that this unnecessary burden should not be imposed upon Baker. The selections ought to be made by the department commanders or commanding generals of the divisional areas. "They and their staffs will be on the spot and will give first hand information" while they had "the coöperation of quartermaster, engineer and sanitary experts of the army to aid

¹ Bliss to Baker, April 21, 1917.

them in the decision as to which were the most suitable sites.”¹ It is easy to imagine how the wrangles over camp sites might have reached the floor of the Congress for an airing and led to long delays.

With immense contracts for building, munitions and supplies being made and thousands of commissions as reserve officers (aside from those being trained for line command) being given to those who were to direct the work, the ugly danger of war profiteering appeared. Bliss held that there should be no removal of the restriction in the case of reserve officers which applied to those of the regular service. They must have no personal interest in any business which might come under their supervision. The rule, he wrote, was one “safeguarding the interests of the United States.” If this were not enough, “dissatisfied contractors are liable to make the charge that a firm which had some of its officials in the Reserve Corps had received favors. We may know that that charge is not true, but it is the kind of charge on which Congressional investigations have been ordered in the past and are likely to be ordered in the future.”² In short, Bliss reasoned that this apprehension ought to be convincing if the appeal to ethical standards was not.

Meanwhile the War Department in its costly preparations as the nation called for speed was proceeding on a promise to pay. In view of the enormous grants of funds at a later President’s personal disposition in his war on an economic depression, the Congressional attitude in a war against an armed enemy is surely worth mentioning as a contrast in legislative moods. The Congress had supplied President Wilson with an emergency sum of an hundred million dollars which must be distributed among the departments, including naval as well as army preparations. The Congressional illusion that our mere potentiality set in the balance against the Teutonic powers would be sufficient was challenged by the staff experts’ estimate that three billions of dollars would be needed to equip and place the million in the field, which the War Department continued to prepare for, although no further appropriation was made by the Congress until June 15.³ This surely required a certain amount of courage and patience on the part of Baker and the two elders.

¹ Bliss to Scott, May 7, 1917.

² Bliss to Scott, May 11, 1917.

³ *Newton D. Baker: America at War*. Palmer. I, 247.

XV

THE LONG VIEW

EVERY movement in our preparations brought the reminder that we were not acting as a single nation but with Allies. We waited upon the arrival of the British and French missions of experts in the United States to bring the light fresh from their councils and the front into the darkness in which we groped with only one sure premise in our grasp: we must have men in organized units and equipped as the first step in making an army regardless of how or where it was to play its part.

Our inner circle of experts knew that the situation of the Allies had suffered a most serious reverse in the spring offensive by the French on the western front; they were certain that Russia might be counted out of the war for any further effective action. Their receptiveness upon the missions' arrival amounted to humility. As professionals they fully appreciated the value of veteran professional experience with the European military machines. Once they had the Allied plan, then they could proceed with intelligence toward a given goal.

But the Allies had no common plan. If they had realized the value of bringing us one, instead of adding confusion to our own guesswork as to what they would expect of us, they had not acted upon it. They had not even met in counsel before they left Europe on different ships. Under the spell of our enormous resources, the vast wealth we had accrued during the war, and the immense reservoir of our fresh man-power, they naturally hastened each to present his own case to strengthen his own hand as the best way to win the war for what was publicly a common cause.

Arthur Balfour was the statesman of the British mission and former Premier M. René Viviani of the French. General Tom Bridges was the chief soldier of the British and Marshal Joffre of the French. Their first concern was loans from us for their depleted war chests. Once these were made, both sides were in agreement that

the Allied situation was desperate, that they needed immediate assistance on the battle-field and that evidence of our good faith should be given promptly by the actual presence of American soldiers in France to show our flag.¹ They were in agreement on the principle that as theirs was the veterans' experience in command our man-power should be under their tutelage, which the British would have British and the French would have French.

A most significant memorandum is that of Bliss to Scott on May 4. If the Allies could have united on the plan it proposed, and if they had supplied the shipping requisite for this prompt action to meet the demand which they considered so urgent, the course of our part in the war might have been changed. We might have had an army of five hundred thousand men in training in France before the end of the summer of 1917, or eight months before Pershing's total attained that number.

In reading this memorandum we must bear in mind the difference, so pronounced in the preservation of official secrecy for military ends, between the outside and inside view. Our public was still unaware of the true situation on the western front, or in Russia, or of the heavy inroads on shipping by the unrestricted submarine campaign which had brought us into the war. Marshal Joffre's confident address before the United States Senate and on other public occasions was in utter contrast to his frank confession at a secret meeting with our war college experts, who knew what he expected of them while the Congress and the people did not.²

As background for this memorandum of May 4, more than three weeks before Pershing departed for France, it is also important to realize that the army which we were about to raise would be under a greater handicap in meeting the German army than our minute men and frontiersmen in meeting the British in the Revolution. Our forefathers had their own hunting rifles which were really superior to those issued to the British regulars. When cannon were not used in their skirmishes, the Americans were on at least an even footing in arms. But it would take more than a year, probably nearer two, before we could equip our army of 1917 with sufficient rifles of our own pattern and adequate artillery. We had the untrained

¹ War College Division Records, 9971-A-47 and 9971-C-4.

² Ibid., 9971-C-4.

man-power, and the Allied plants were in full tide of arms production, more than able to meet the needs of their waning man-power in guns if not in shells. All this was evident at the time this memorandum was written, but the force of it could not be applied until later.

If the recommendations of this memorandum could have been followed it might change the plans for our huge cantonments which were yet on paper; and in it we have an early mention of the problem of the preservation of the independence of our army, which was to become the subject of such exhaustive negotiations and discussion and to try the patience of Pershing.

"1. Both the English and French Missions are agreed as to the necessity, if we wish to take part in the present war during this year, of sending our troops to Europe at the very earliest possible moment. Their proposition is no longer to send over a small division and then retain the rest of our troops at home until they complete their training here, but to send them abroad for their training as rapidly as they can be organized and as rapidly as available shipping can take them. So earnest are they in this matter that they assume the probability, at the outset at least, of our getting all our military equipment from existing stocks in Europe. General Bridges' proposition even contemplates the possibility, if our troops were to join and operate with the English, of our subsisting on their ration.

"From this point of view, our proposed divisional training areas will be places to organize and clothe our troops, without the necessity of giving them technical training in the methods of combat pursued on the western front. In fact, any attempt of ours to give such instruction might complicate matters by teaching men things in America that they will have to unlearn in Europe.

"Personally, my view has always been that if we want to get into this war 'with both feet' at the earliest possible day, the only way to do it is to follow the recommendations of the two Missions. I have not given it detailed consideration because I have assumed that the available shipping will be so small in amount that the great mass of our troops would have to remain here for months during which they might better be trained under the supervision of officers whom we might borrow from the English and French armies, and which have already been offered to us. If the Allies can assure us shipping in such amount that, combined with what we may make available ourselves, we can count on constant ferriage over the Atlantic, I should unhesitatingly recommend that we adopt this plan and do all of our training after arrival in Europe.

"If such a plan be feasible I would move all but a small part of our

regular army and of the National Guard and the first 500,000 men to Europe as rapidly as they are organized, clothed and can be transported. The feasibility will depend largely upon the amount of shipping that the Allies can release for our steady use. The announcement of such a movement and evidence of its feasibility would produce a vastly greater moral effect on the combatants in Europe on both sides than the sending of a division or any other small force with no evidence that it was to be rapidly followed by a large army.

"2. If it were announced that two divisions of the regular army and two of the National Guard (without indicating the composition of these divisions) were to go abroad as soon as shipping for transportation be available, it is likely that the regular army with all of its increments and the National Guard would be filled up by volunteers with a rush. The regular army, with all of its increments, would still have every regiment with its field officers and most or perhaps all of its captains regular officers now in the service. They would have a small proportion of old non-commissioned officers and trained enlisted men. The junior officers and the rest of the enlisted men would be new. But as the English and French Missions contemplate a certain period of training at the front these regiments, with their considerable proportion of experienced officers, would be in good shape in a very short time. If we cannot follow the plan suggested in paragraph 1 above, I think that we should announce our intention of doing something like that which is suggested in this paragraph. It would result in our occupying from the beginning something more than a very inconspicuous position and would entitle our commanding general to the consideration that his force would warrant. *We could from the beginning secure our proper and independent place on the line and not run the risk of having our organizations fed in here and there and thus losing our identity as a national army under our own control.* [Italics are the author's.]

"3. I fully agreed with what General Bridges says as to the desirability of our taking the English rifle just as it is, provided we can get sufficient numbers of these to arm all our troops that may go into the field until such time as we can re-arm them in a body with our own rifle."

Bliss favored adopting the British guns if the British could supply them in sufficient quantity, and we were to train with the British on account of the common language. He favored a six gun battery. Men who served in France and who remember our big divisions, our troubles about replacements and our system of training, will have their own opinions about the rest of this memorandum, which was approved by Scott, in its policy and foresight.

"5. I fully agree with what General Bridges says as to the necessity of adopting the 250-man company. I have believed this for years.

"It almost of necessity carries with it the recognition of the battalion as the fighting unit instead of the regiment.

"This leads inevitably to a reconsideration of the present organization of our division. I believe that our division is too large and unwieldy. Both the French and English have come to a division of, in paper strength, 12 infantry battalions, divided in the French organization into two brigades of six battalions each and in the English organization into three brigades of four battalions each. The English add a pioneer battalion which corresponds, I suppose, to our battalion of engineers. The rest of their division apparently consists of artillery with, I suppose, a proper but small proportion of auxiliary services. They seem to have excluded the cavalry from the divisional organization.

"I am inclined to the opinion that our cavalry should be a field army organization to be attached to divisions in just such proportion as the work of an individual division requires, which is often *nil*.

"I believe that we will come to some such organization in the course of this war, whether we now like it or not, and it might just as well be studied out now. We already provide for a fourth battalion in our regiments as a depot battalion. A demand for reinforcements (not a demand to replace casualties) may cause these depot battalions to be hurried to the front. They must be immediately replaced by others and by and by we may have several depot battalions for one so-called regiment. Before the war is over we may, like the English and French, have twenty-five or thirty battalions forming part of one paper regiment.

"6. General Bridges says that we can have transport wagons, harness, etc. for two divisions supplied to us 'on the other side.' In order to save transportation and shipping the troops which first go over should carry nothing that can be given them by the English or French on arrival. I do not know whether the 'etc.' of General Bridges includes animals. If it does not, they must be sent.

"7. General Bridges speaks of the desirability of our officers learning in advance something of the system of warfare now being carried on by the English and French troops. I think that the officer who is to be assigned to command the first expedition, together with his entire staff and possibly the colonels of all his regiments, should be immediately sent abroad in order to study the situation and methods at first hand before the arrival of their troops. Their presence here is not necessary for the movement of the command. This will be largely attended to up to the moment of leaving port by officers who will not form part of the expedition. A temporary commander can be appointed with such staff as is necessary, taken out of the remaining officers of the command."

Whether or not the announcement that we were to send five hundred thousand men to France immediately would have speeded up volunteering, the response had been so disappointing the third

week after our entry into the war that the adoption of the draft became a necessity, regardless of its virtues as the fair system, if we were to raise an army of a million. Both houses of the Congress had passed a draft bill by April 29, but the final act was not to come out of conference for three weeks.

Pershing, who had been chosen with the recommendation of both Scott and Bliss, arrived in Washington on May 10, from the Mexican border. While he gathered his staff and listened to the advice of the Allied experts, he was soon to discover the truth of Bliss' remark that the members of neither Allied mission were even "allied among themselves." They had the same variety of views about tactics and requirements that ever prevail in the discussions in staff councils. Some members of the French mission were not of the Joffre partisans in French military circles. Colonel Fabre thought that we could give no military assistance.¹ Bridges of the British thought we could, and Joffre that we must. They did agree that we must be in the war with our flesh and blood as well as money and factories. The British yielded to French pressure for decision that the troops we sent to France should be attached to the French army for training. The British who alone might have shipping to spare would supply none, and we must depend upon such as we could muster of our own for transport of our first small expedition. Bliss wrote two days after Pershing's arrival in Washington: ²

"I understand that the original instructions of the Secretary of War contemplated a force which could be sent to France *quickly*, in order to secure the moral effect which its prompt arrival would, it was believed, produce; and further, that for this purpose a force of about 12,000 men, practically without animals and without arms was to be formed. Receiving arms in Europe, a great amount of transportation would be unnecessary for ammunition.

"It appears that the French officers think that, while their government could supply deficiencies in armament and equipment for the first expedition, the moral effect of our force arriving fully armed and equipped would be greater. Will the moral effect be greater due to promptness of arrival or the possession of full equipment? If the former, sea-tonnage must be cut to the minimum." [For sea-tonnage did not weigh much in the mind of the French who thought in terms of land transport, while sea-tonnage was never out of Bliss' mind.]

¹ Major General Joseph E. Kuhn to the author.

² Bliss to Scott, May 12, 1917.

"Will the moral effect be due to the belief of the French that the first expedition is the advance guard of a large army rapidly following and also fully armed and equipped? If so, exultation will be changed into depression in a short time." On their own statements, the French are actually declining in numbers and must soon consolidate two divisions to get one at full strength, and with the present campaign the British will begin to decline in numbers; but they are both able to keep up their original supply of material. This means that they will have a constantly increasing supply of rifles and that from time to time batteries of serviceable artillery will go out of action from lack of men to serve them.

"Why should we introduce new calibers on the line while rifles and guns and ammunition, in increasing numbers, are waiting for us to use them, with no chance of confusion due to different types?"

Bliss was as insistent on this main point as on shipping; we must be able to transport our men and also they must have weapons. The British rifle plants which had been built in the United States early in the war could produce their Enfield in quantitative excess of their own present needs as the French could light artillery. The British plants were able to hasten a supply of Enfields which we modified to suit our needs. It eventuated that the amount of artillery and also of machine guns of our own make—which was just then coming into huge quantity production at home—we had in France at the close of the war was insignificant, although mass production from our new plants was beginning and would have given us an ample supply in 1919.

The Allied missions had given us one definite impression: we must prepare to send a large force to France to insure victory if Russia were to be counted out of the war as a combatant factor on the side of the Allies, when it was the view of military experts that only a miracle could bring back discipline and an aggressive spirit to her disintegrating army.

We would send the small force to France as a gesture for moral effect the Allies desired, but this was little help in forming a policy for a large force which must strike heavy blows. Baker decided to send the man who was to command it ahead of the troops to France with a staff of experts to study the situation first hand and to make the recommendations which should be the guide of our home preparations. Meanwhile, the conflict of Allied advice and appeals which

led to this had revised our own ideas and strengthened the conviction that we must preserve the independence of our army. The situation had become quite different from when Bliss had proposed to do our part in the emergency by dispatching five hundred thousand men at once if the Allies would meet our offer with sufficient shipping. He wrote to Baker on May 25:

"It is very refreshing to read such sound and well-considered views as those expressed by Mr. Moore¹ in his letter, herewith, to Colonel House, and which you have permitted me to see.

"Of course, you know what has been the consistent and oft-repeated view of our General Staff. Until the arrival of the English and French Missions it was not assumed by anyone that we would do anything else than be guided by what, up to that time, had been the repeated recommendations and hopes expressed by many high officials, both civil and military, in England and France. These hopes and recommendations were to the effect that we would avoid what proved to be the grave error on the part of the English in attempting to take a decided part in the land warfare before they were ready. They sacrificed their regular army—their only means for training raw levies,—in the early days of the war,—and perhaps this was a necessity. But you can imagine what a helpless mob a body of a million or more of men is when it has not an ample leaven of trained officers and veteran troops to organize and train it. And England found herself with such a mob on her hands after the practical destruction of her regular forces. It caused the larger part of the long delay which ensued before this mob could be gotten into shape for field service.

"We assumed that, taking advantage of the experience of the English and believing that it would not be necessary to send away a part of our small regular army needed for the training of raw troops at home, we would have a considerable period for careful and intensive training and that none of our troops would go abroad until next spring. We did not assume that the Entente Allies were in such a condition as to make any other course desirable or necessary. As you know, all our estimates, carried in the pending large appropriation bill, were based on the assumption of this somewhat prolonged period of training. They did not include the huge expenses that will be incurred when we actually begin to engage in the war with its corresponding enormous loss and waste of expensive material of all kinds.

"Our knowledge of what seems to be the real situation began to clarify shortly after the arrival of the English and French Missions. The gentlemen belonging to these Missions at first were very reserved in their con-

¹ George Gordon Moore who had been frequently a guest of Field Marshal Sir John French at his headquarters when French was in command of the British Army in France.

ferences with us. At first they laid stress only on the desirability of having a small body of troops go to the European theatre of war for the mere purpose of producing a moral effect. At first they spoke of this moral effect as being one to be produced on the troops and people of the Entente Allies. As they began to speak more unreservedly they let it appear that they wanted also to produce a moral effect upon our own people. They did not seem to think that we, as a nation, were interested enough in the matter, and that we needed something to wake us up. It was not long before they said quite openly that we would not feel that we were in the war until we were well 'blooded'; that what we needed was to have a large casualty list telegraphed home and that that would stir our fighting blood.

"As you know, these views did not change the belief of our General Staff that we should properly train and organize and thoroughly equip and prepare for war a real and formidable force before we attempted to go across the water, but as the foreign gentlemen spoke more and more freely it became evident that what they want and need is *men*, whether trained or not. They have urged us to send small organizations, even companies, as rapidly as they can be organized, and allow them to be trained abroad. They have told us that while it requires a long time to train a large army so that it will play its part properly on the firing line, the *recruits* that must be fed in in order to keep that line at its full strength do not require so much training. This, of course, is quite evidently true; an untrained man between two veterans will soon get to do his work well, whereas if all three are untrained they are helpless.

"It seemed to most of us that what both the English and French really wanted from us was not a large well-trained army but a large number of smaller units which they could feed promptly into their line as parts of their own organizations in order to maintain their man power at full strength. General Bridges told us that the French man power had for some time been steadily going down and that it will never reach its former strength unless it is reinforced in some such way as indicated above. He also told us that the English man power will never exceed its present strength and that with the present campaign it will steadily decline. He told us that if the French receive no such reinforcements they will now have to consolidate two divisions into one in order to obtain one of reasonably full strength. He said that England and France could keep up their supply of material but not men; that in fact they were sure to have an excess of material because new rifles were unused for lack of men to fire them and batteries of artillery were going out of action not for want of field guns but for want of men to serve them. His idea seemed to be that we could feed in large numbers of organizations, going to Europe unarmed and using material already there for which they had no men and for which in the near future they would have still fewer men.

"All of these considerations raise a very grave question in my mind; shall we wait to train, equip and arm our troops, or shall we feed them in as reinforcements to the English and to the French, taking with us such arms as we have and such as we may be able to manufacture and also using such as we can obtain in France? If we follow the latter course it will be at a greatly disproportionate sacrifice of life and suffering on our part and it is problematical whether it will, after all, produce a decisive result.

"When the war is over it may be a literal fact that the American flag may not have appeared anywhere on the line because our organizations will simply be parts of battalions and regiments of the Entente Allies. We might have a million men there and yet no American army and no American commander. Speaking frankly, I have received the impression from English and French officers that such is their deliberate desire.

"I and many other General Staff officers have expressed, in our discussions, the same view as that held by Mr. Moore in his letter to Colonel House; to wit, that the time has come for the English and the French to stand fast and wait until our reinforcements can reach them in such a way as to give *the final, shattering blow*. I doubt if the Allies will contemplate with satisfaction such a course so long as they can hope to get our men rapidly, whether trained or not, but I think it is a course which our Government should urge upon them with all the force at its disposal."

This letter was signed by Bliss, not as Assistant Chief of Staff but as Acting Chief of Staff. Classmate Scott, still officially Chief of Staff, had departed to bring the weight of his military position on the mission to Russia under Elihu Root, who was seen by the military experts as going on a forlorn hope; but he might have succeeded if the eloquent theorist Kerensky could have been imbued with the strength and decision to strike as hard against the Bolsheviks as Lenin and his group had struck at him.¹ In that event the history of our part in the war as well as that of the future of Russia might have read quite differently.

On May 31, when the passage of the Draft Act led to the expansion of the original plan to more than a million men, Bliss was back on the subject of shipping with a leonine earnestness. In want of any from the Allies, who had huge piles of supplies waiting on our docks for shipment, the responsibility for providing transport for our army was with the new Shipping Board, which was in the throes of its own initial mad effort to hasten construction in compe-

¹ Elihu Root to the author.

tition for material with the new war plants and cantonments. Bliss wrote to Baker recommending that "the attention of the Shipping Board be invited to the following":

"1. For the purposes of this war we are now engaged in raising an army which, on the addition of those called out by the selective draft, will number approximately 1,400,000 men.

"2. Even if all of the training be completed in the United States (except the relatively small part which all anticipate must be given after arrival in Europe before actually engaging in trench warfare), some 900,000 will be awaiting transportation early in the Autumn.

"3. Even if we had at our uninterrupted disposal the ships listed in your letter of May 28th and assuming (which in my opinion would be an underestimate) that these vessels could make one round trip with troops each month it would require four years to transport the above number of troops from the United States to France.¹

"4. If we sent abroad only the troops of the regular army and the National Guard, at war strength, it would require at the above rate two years and one-half to transport them with the shipping listed in your letter of May 28th.

"5. The situation which thus appears to confront us will rapidly become intolerable. The country has assumed and the Allies in Europe have assumed that the force we now propose to train would be ready to take its part in the war in, at the maximum, a year but it is evident that we cannot transport this force across the Atlantic in one year from now even if we were to begin it tomorrow and without any training, without a very large increase in the number of ships asked for by you.

"6. Before another step is taken the War Department should know exactly what it can count upon in this matter. If the Allies need food and general supplies to the exclusion of troops it seems to me that it would be an inexcusable thing for us to raise this large body of men now, nor can we tell when it will be wise to begin raising them until the question of transportation is definitely settled. Until that is done we can make no plan whatever. I have stated above the length of time that would be required to transport only the regular army and the National Guard with the ships enumerated in your letter of May 28th. If we cannot have that amount of transportation constantly available that time will be much increased. It seems to me that it will be an act of inexcusable folly to call out even a large portion of these troops,—and much more so to call out the selective draft army,—with an entirely unnecessary expense of perhaps two billion dollars incurred after the troops are ready to go abroad and before they can be sent.

¹ Six months later in the critical winter of 1917-18 the "turn around" averaged over two months.

"7. If it be decided that the shipping interests must take precedence over the military ones it would be better to devote that two billion dollars to the construction of ships and wait until we see at a definite date ahead of us a reasonable supply of such ships for transportation purposes before we begin the expense of raising troops and the unnecessary drain of the man power of the country away from industrial pursuits.

"8. I repeat what I have said above that no military plan whatever can be made until the question of transportation is settled and then our military plan, if it be a wise one, must be based on the amount of such transportation."

Baker continued to stress the importance of shipping to the harassed Board as it came to grips with the execution of its magnificent program of swift construction which flattered pride in our industrial speed and resource. At the time the nation's thought was concentrated on the draft, the building of the cantonments, and the summoning of the men to the colors. We must raise an army and prepare to arm it. Professional military opinion generally held that self respect and sound preparation required that we should not depend upon foreign arms; and professional ambition sought to make better arms than the Allies had. Our public hailed the prospect of American inventive and manufacturing genius demonstrating its superiority.

To have suggested that haste in raising an army was less important than haste in providing transport would have brought a public storm at home and discouragement to the Allied publics who judged our good faith by our willingness to bring our manpower to bear in the trenches. The Allied army staffs would have protested against the diversion of Allied shipping to bring over untrained soldiers and munitions and supplies for them when the Allied people were on food rations. The inconsistencies of public emotion and political policies is as inherent in war as the unexpected. Baker saw his part as training the men promptly while other chiefs built the ships.

Six months later we had the crisis of no ships for the divisions that were ready to embark. But we did have the divisions, when the Allies began calling for all we had in camp, and more, in the great crisis of the war.

XVI

AS HIS CHIEF SAW HIM

THE Secretary did not have to consider who should take Scott's place. Automatically Bliss occupied it, moving from his former desk to the one in the room adjoining that of the Secretary, whose respect for Bliss' advice had grown daily since our entry into the war. Bliss would remain there until Scott's return, or his retirement on September 22, and Bliss until his retirement on December 31, and then Baker planned to have a chief fresh from service in France whom Pershing would approve as a teammate.¹

Meanwhile, there was no sign that Bliss' reservoir of wisdom would run dry in the coming months or the faucet get clogged for words to analyze a major problem. His memory was a cyclopedic reference in the essential details of army administration. Upon this as a background was stamped the blue-print of the great complex plan of 1917 as a guide in its future development.

When asked to describe the relationship between the Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff, Baker said it would be very difficult but he undertook it in some detail in a dictated statement at the author's request.

"Each day at two o'clock, an hour observed with almost religious fidelity by both, the Chief of Staff would come into my office with one or more wire desk baskets piled high with papers. Taking his seat opposite me at the desk, Bliss would take bundles of papers from the basket one by one explaining the critical point, the decision reached, and the action proposed to be taken, and then hand the paper to me for signature.

"I would suppose that in about fifty or sixty per cent of the cases, the papers were routine and my signature ended the matter. In another twenty-five per cent there would be some element of strangeness or exception which Bliss would scrupulously point out, as for instance saying, 'Mr. Secretary, this is almost like the case you had several weeks ago with regard to Officer X, but there is this difference between the two cases,' and so on. As to cases like this, there would usually be a question or two from me answered by brief statements from Bliss setting forth army

¹ Baker to the author.

practice in analogous matters. Some of the twenty-five per cent. thus considered I would reserve for reflection. A whole bundle of papers would be left with me as to each such question.

"The remaining papers when their character was stated would clearly deal with questions of policy upon which the decision was likely to make precedents or determine important future action. If I was clear about these, they were decided immediately. Wherever, however, I was in doubt, they, too, were reserved for further study and some of them for conference with other cabinet officers or the President. Each bundle of papers consisted of a number of documents beginning with the original letter, communication or report which raised the question requiring action with the normal endorsements upon it as it progressed through military channels to the office of the Secretary of War; studies were then attached by appropriate sections of the General Staff, opinions by the Judge Advocate General when legal questions were involved, the Inspector General for disciplinary matters, etc. Then generally a written review by the Assistant Chief of Staff, approved by the Chief of Staff, or in matters of great moment, a careful written review by the Chief of Staff himself was attached.

"Whenever any officer member of a section of the General Staff dissented, his reasons were stated in full and all concurrences and dissents were included in the file so that when I came to examine it, I had the benefit of each point of view on the question. Many of these papers I took home with me and worked at on Sundays, but I rarely took any home at night as it was my practice to be in the War Department every night quite late and there were no hours left for anything but sleep when I finally got home. When I agreed with the recommendations of the Chief of Staff upon full examination of these reserved cases, I simply signed the papers and sent them to his room. When I disagreed, I brought them up at our next conference for further conversation, or in several instances where I was quite clear, I dictated final opinions, attached them to the papers, and so returned them as decided questions."¹

In another letter, which is a most valuable characterization of Bliss by his chief, Baker wrote:

"Bliss had in a higher degree than anybody else with whom I have ever been in contact, the habit of deliberate and consecutive thinking. Nearly everybody else, including myself, thinks spasmodically and if a good idea occurs to me, I reach a good solution, but Bliss' mind was a comprehensive card index and his method of using it was like one of these machines they have in the Census Bureau where you feed in ten

¹ Letter of July 23, 1934.

thousand cards with various data upon them and then read at the bottom of the machine the total number of cross-eyed persons in the ten thousand. He had what I like to call a brooding intelligence and nothing is more characteristic of my recollection of him than to see him sitting in his office or mine, looking out the window making up his mind. It was a slow, methodical, inclusive, and consecutive recollection of each material element to which there was automatically given the proper weight, and when he relaxed he had a result which he could state, almost categorically, and demonstrate to anybody who doubted by instantly marshaling all the questions and considerations on both sides.

"I do not know whether I have really conveyed a picture, but I have one in my own mind. When he had a problem to solve, he thought it out first from beginning to end. When he had reached his conclusion, the statement of the conclusion was as convincing to an auditor as the demonstration of a proposition in Euclid. Our conferences, therefore, really consisted in a series of brief statements by Bliss much of the character of British judicial statements when a judge sums up a case."¹

Scott might nod with fatigue under the ordeal of papers which army tradition still insisted upon referring to the Chief of Staff when they ought to have been settled by a subordinate; but Bliss would sometimes talk and growl to himself in his sifting for the Secretary as he worked his way through another batch which wasted the time he needed for more vital business. One night he was caught in a rebellious mood by Baker, who had summoned a meeting of staff chiefs in Bliss' office, but had himself been unavoidably detained beyond the hour set. As he entered the door with his usual swift, quiet step the chiefs were seated around the room in the shadow while Bliss, his bald dome under the drop light, his eyebrows and mustache stiff, was signing papers, papers, more and more papers. Buck-passing might be a good way to keep the army occupied in peace, but it was out of place in war when the worried Allies could not decide just what it was they wanted us to do and the Congress had appropriated no funds to do anything with.

"Here we are still waiting! Why doesn't that Secretary of War keep his appointments?"

Baker overheard this as he entered, unnoted by Bliss but noted by the other chiefs, who relished the situation. Bliss was still muttering about that tardy Secretary of War when he became aware

¹ Letter of July 30, 1934.

that someone was standing in front of his desk and he looked up to see that it was Baker.¹

"Mr. Secretary," he said, as he rose with squared shoulders in the attitude of a salute, "I did not mean to make any personal references in your presence." Baker chuckled. The incident made him fonder than ever of Bliss. In after years Bliss thought it could not have happened just as reported by Baker. He could never have shown such disrespect to his chief, who had drawn on his imagination to make a good story.

Though Bliss did not lack words for major problems, he was not quite true to his inheritance from his pedagogical father in patient elucidation for the purposes of instruction on occasions when all his experience told him an idea was wrong.

"It's all rot," he remarked in returning a memorandum by a brilliant but highly sensitive staff officer.²

General Graves, who was Secretary of the General Staff, and later Assistant Chief of Staff, told Bliss that the officer was much hurt, and felt that he would be happier if transferred now that he had evidently become superfluous.

"He's very valuable," Bliss replied. "If he weren't, do you suppose I'd want him around here? But that idea was all rot. Tell him he can't be right all the time."

There were occasions when the appearance of some old army comrade whom he had not seen for years would make him spring up from his desk with a smile that spread over his whole face and radiated the glad transport of his whole being in his vigorous welcome. He would forget the complexity of his present ordeal of this present hideous war, enveloping all mankind in its rending steel clutches, in recalling incidents of happier and simpler days in Cuba, the Philippines or on the Mexican border. Baker relates an instance:

"John Greenway and I had been school boys together. Later John became a Roosevelt Rough Rider and then went to Arizona and became a copper magnate. After we went into the War, John came into my office one day and told me that he was still a bachelor, had more money than it was

¹ Baker to the author.

² Major General W. S. Graves to the author.

good for anybody to have, and that if anybody ought to expose his life fighting for his country, he was that man, so he had come in to get a commission. Even to John I stuck to the rules and explained that commissions were given only on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee of the General Staff, but that I would take him to the Chief of Staff and get him to send him to the Personnel Committee for their judgment. I opened the door into Bliss' office, John following me and started to make some introduction to General Bliss of my boyhood friend, when to my surprise they literally rushed into each others' arms with as fine an exhibition of manly emotion and affection as I have ever seen. Bliss then explained to me that John had been an invaluable friend when he was in command on the border, and John smilingly finished the narrative by saying that one day he had some occasion to go to Bliss' office to meet him to confer on some local military problem and that having inquired where he was likely to find the new commanding general, he was directed out to the line of the international frontier where a line of bales of cotton had been placed to protect our frontier guard from stray bullets fired by the various Mexican factions at one another on the other side of the line. Behind one of these bales of cotton, he found General Bliss lying on his back reading a yellow backed novel which turned out to be a copy of Plato's 'Republic' in the original Greek with the back torn off and the yellow cover of 'Mr. Barnes of New York' pasted on so that he would not seem high hat to his staff." ¹

Again such was Bliss' preoccupation with some subject that he might seem quite official, direct and a little offish to a man of whom he was very fond. Such was the experience of Brigadier General Palmer E. Pierce, who had nine jobs in the formative period as *liaison* officer between the army and industry, and later commanded a brigade in France.² Subsequently the high respect Bliss had for his ability had most material proof. Just before Bliss started abroad to serve on the Supreme War Council, when Pierce entered Baker's office where Bliss was present, Baker exclaimed to Pierce: "You cannot go. We cannot spare you from Washington yet." Bliss had chosen Pierce as the best fitted expert to accompany him abroad to effect Inter-Allied industrial coördination.

Sometimes he would slip under his desk blotter papers which he was not yet ready to sign or reject, and which had better wait. One day Graves slyly retrieved one that a sub-chief wanted back.

"You took a paper from under my blotter yesterday when I was

¹ Baker's letter to the author, July 30, 1934.

² Pierce to the author.

in the Secretary's office," Bliss told Graves the next day. "I knew it was there. It might be so important soon that I was holding it there to keep it in mind." Delay would not break or put flesh on any bones. Immediate action might be important to the author of the paper but not yet to the whole. It might never be to the whole, but if it were the Chief of Staff would know that its turn had come.

Across the hall from Bliss' office Pershing and Harbord were making up the list of their pioneer staff experts for France, striving to get good men out of the meager professional personnel, without robbing the home organization of men who appeared indispensable to key positions at home. The day before their departure they had as yet received no formal instructions, so they wrote a letter embodying their idea of what they should be in the form of a letter from the Chief of Staff to Pershing.¹

Harbord took this to Bliss, who was besieged by papers and callers. Bliss read it, saw that it was sound and recognized the custom by which officers often wrote their own travel orders. If Pershing wanted that kind of a letter from the Chief of Staff he should have it.² Bliss signed it and passed it back to Harbord.

On this occasion the scholar might have drawn on his extensive vocabulary to explain that formal instructions were being prepared. If he had, Pershing would not have wondered why he had two letters of instruction.³ With a student of history for Secretary of War and for Chief of Staff the busy mills of the War Department would hardly neglect precedent which had particular importance when we were sending a commander to France to coöperate with Allies in a European war in which we were so uncertain of our part. Major General Francis J. Kernan had been assigned to draft instructions to be signed by the Secretary of War.⁴ On the morning of May 28 before Pershing's departure for France, Baker said at their final interview:

"Here are your orders, General. The President has just approved them." ⁵

¹ Major General James G. Harbord to the author.

² Bliss' statement to Baker.

³ *My Experiences in the World War*. Pershing, I, 37.

⁴ *Newton D. Baker: America at War*. Palmer, I, 173.

⁵ *Ibid.* I, 171.

They began with "The President directs" in the regular official form. Without giving the whole in this book, the fifth significant paragraph is repeated:

"In military operations against the Imperial German Government you are directed to coöperate with the forces of the other countries employed against that enemy; but in so doing the underlying idea must be kept in view that the forces of the United States are a separate and distinct component of the combined forces, the identity of which must be preserved. This fundamental rule is subject to such minor exceptions in particular circumstances as your judgment may approve. The action is confided to you, and you will exercise full discretion in determining the manner of coöperation. But until the forces of the United States are in your judgment sufficiently strong to warrant operations as an independent command, it is understood that you will coöperate as component of whatever army you may be assigned to by the French Government."

The letter to Pershing which Bliss signed had no reference to maintaining the independence of our army. Its importance could not have been brought home to Pershing in the previous weeks as it had to Baker and Bliss since the arrival of the Allied missions. Moreover, Pershing might have taken it for granted. Later the point was to be much labored, but the forethought of the War Department became a guide in meeting the difficulties inherent in applying the prevision.

Pershing had full latitude in deciding as to the character of any emergency in which the Allies appealed to us to sacrifice the identity of our forces. In this strange destiny which sent an American commander to France, he was to have at the outset power which previous American commanders from Washington to Grant had won by slow degrees. His wishes were to be supreme. The home plan was to be molded and adjusted to meet his plan. All Baker's knowledge of general history and Bliss' knowledge of general and military history as applied to the present phenomenal situation they saw as casting them for parts of servants of the army in the field.

On his right hand Baker had a military sage near retirement, whose advice could be influenced by no selfish interest, who knew he would be out of the army before Pershing was ready for action, who might not have a field command, and who knew that none of the glory of field triumphs could rub off on him.

By July 6 Pershing had made his estimate of the situation. His cable made the most gigantic requisition which ever came from an army commander. He did not lead up to the brutal truth by piecemeal approaches but put the whole of it in one parcel. It was no shock to Bliss, who had never had any illusion that the war could be won by an American gesture.

As necessary for victory Pershing's project contemplated a million men in France with provision for expansion to two millions. So the plan to raise a million had not been extravagant and the additional half million might not be enough. But so strained were the resources of the Allies that the financial and economic aid we were to give them must include the building of piers, supply depots, and railroad sidings, the rolling stock for railroads and transport on land—a vast plant for maintenance of our army across the breadth of France. When Baker and Bliss met in conference they faced the building of a new world to be constructed overseas while the home world could hardly muster enough shipping to transport the small pioneer expeditionary force, and our production was at full tide to meet Allied consumption.

At the time, more than a million tons of freight for the Allied governments were piled up in our five eastern seaports awaiting transportation overseas. Of these two hundred thousand were in freight cars, of which there was a shortage for land transport. "The office of the Chief of Staff was created and endowed with supervisory and coördinating powers for the very purpose of meeting conditions such as are presented by our undertaking active operations on a foreign terrain," wrote General Kernan, now acting as Assistant Chief of Staff, four days before the receipt of Pershing's cable.

The former collector of customs in Cuba, in the midst of a bewildering number of suggestions on all subjects, must probe in a maze of contradictory information on a most vital subject in order to approximate some definite method with responsible concentration of authority to establish ports of debarkation for men and supplies.

We were certain of a sufficiency of only one kind of material: the draft would provide youth enough for the hopper. Pershing could be sure of his million, of two millions, three, once officers had been trained to train them and they were equipped, armed, and trans-

ported. This was the home problem; Pershing's to make them into a fighting machine and move forward the supplies, when they were forthcoming, from ports to the front. The division of authority was drawn by a line which was the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean.

XVII

KEEPING ON THE MAIN TRACK

DURING the next four months of unremitting pressure, when major questions were decided in conference with Baker or at the meetings of staff chiefs at which Baker presided, the relative meagerness of the counselor's written record leaves a void which could have been filled only by his personal reminiscences.

Our people were quite unaware of the magnitude of our unprecedented enterprise, which grew with each day's exploration, after Pershing's original stupendous requisition with its remarkable foresight as to the needs for victory which time was to confirm. At the time, Pershing's countrymen at home were still thinking that our funds and stiffening counsel placed at Russia's disposal would galvanize her enormous soldier mass into a fresh effort. We read that Pershing and his staff were in London; we heard whispers that we were sending over a small expeditionary force to France to show the flag.

When our troops had departed for the Civil War fronts and for Cuba we had cheered their march forth; but on this occasion we were warned of the tightening of realities under modern military secrecy which precluded us from knowing the reasons for actions, or drinking stirrup cups and waving flags in the godspeed of an *au revoir* which we knew, in many instances, meant farewell. The fog of war had moved across the Atlantic beyond our ports to our camps. Bliss wrote,

"It is a little difficult for people in civil life to understand that, under present conditions, the safety of our troops goes hand in hand with a possible temporary discomfort or inconvenience or even hardship. For their sake the War Department has to lay stress on the former rather than on the latter. I am sure that Mrs. Drexel will understand what I mean from the following:

"Not long ago we organized the first expedition to France. The troops were moving from various parts of the country on confidential schedules of the railroads. Of course, when people in any community saw a troop

train going through they knew that we were moving troops but the object of it they could only guess nor did they know the exact routes or scheduled times of arrival at various places. We all know that there are many half-insane 'cranks' in the country; and there are undoubtedly many alien spies and enemies who would do harm if they got a chance. We have now over 60,000 troops guarding railroad bridges, tunnels, and other important points. Nevertheless there are a vast number of places which cannot be guarded.

"If the general community knew the exact time of arrival of troop trains at given places there would be great opportunity afforded to criminally disposed enemies to cause some great disaster. We may not be able to guard against this absolutely but it is evident that our favorable chances are increased by having as much secrecy as possible. We all think, and I have no doubt the troops themselves think, that it will be better to go without the refreshments which Mrs. Drexel and her organization so kindly wish to offer to the soldiers rather than to take the unnecessary risk that would result from allowing the railroads to give her the information which she desires and which could not possibly be kept secret from the general public.

"Another thing that we are trying to guard against and that is to keep alien enemies from knowing that we are assembling troops at a particular place and time, because it is very possible that information may be conveyed abroad in time to enable the German submarines to prepare an attack."¹

When the Committee on Public Information wanted permission for newspaper men to accompany the Navy, Pershing's attitude meant a War Department refusal. The Navy was the trustee for their lives until they were through the submarine danger zone. It was for Pershing to announce their arrival and—with the approval of the exacting Allied censorship, which was insistent on the point—to supply such news of their doings and of all succeeding reinforcements as he thought wise. He was the trustee for their lives in the coming ordeal which outsiders thought might be brief, even only a display march for the sake of Allied morale, and which the insiders in the urgent company of the stark truth, knew must last a long time. It was certain only that it could not end until the survivors on their return voyage would require no naval convoy but cross a free ocean in peace.

This secrecy numbed or intensified suspense among the people according to individual mood. It eliminated the old glory and emo-

¹ Letter to Jefferson R. Kean of the American National Red Cross, June 27, 1917.

tional compensations of war which we had enjoyed in the minor affair with Spain, when we had pen pictures of the character and actions of leading personalities in the Santiago campaign which we had followed as if it were a football game in which the Spaniards stood for the deadly rival of our own *alma mater*.

Then, if the Spaniards had spies, we did not bother about them; we had no Allies to circumscribe the satisfaction of our public curiosity. Now, we might not know our heroes in order to acclaim them. The A. E. F. was an entirely anonymous institution into which we were to feed all our strength. But this was the way of this record-breaking war in which we must justify our national character with some record breaking of our own. We would play the game and conform to the changing rules which the European masters of the art made out of the latest lessons of the exclusive news which they had from the front or the munition factories. But the commanding general in France seemed a very remote person and the War Department, which gave out so little information, moved in mysterious and often incomprehensible ways.

Bliss' well of sentiment was rarely tapped in a written communication, but it appears in a manner which his father would have approved in the following letter:

"'What shall the conscripted man do between now and his going to the cantonments to mentally fit himself for the war?' you ask. He has no time now to study books and learn the theory of what he will soon be learning by practice. But it is the mental and moral attitude in which he approaches his new duty that will constitute his best preparation for it. Let him read and do whatever will strengthen his devotion to the ideals of his country; that will make him realize that in his individual hands has been placed the honor of his family and his people and that he must bring it back unstained except, perhaps, it be reddened by his blood in defense of it; that will make him resolve that, in fighting to the end a war for justice and humanity, he shall not come back with the knowledge that he has wantonly done anything to add to the brutality and savagery of it; and, more than all, let him read those things that were read to him at his mother's knees, that will help him to keep a clean spirit in a clean body, so that if the time should come when he has to pay the last full measure of devotion it will be a sacrifice without stain or blemish that he will lay on his country's altar.'" ¹

¹ Letter to D. C. Vandercook, August 7, 1917.

Once the soldier was trained his power should not be diverted from Pershing's army on any tangent adventure. As Chief of Staff, just short of a year before he counseled against the Siberian expedition in the Supreme War Council, Bliss wrote in answer to a suggestion which appealed to our Pacific slope:

"Any attempt to send a force to Russia at this time would be in violation of the military principles of concentrated effort. While it may well be said that the sending of a small force is not dispersion in great enough degree to cause any appreciable harm, it should be understood that this force, even though small, must be supplied and must be furnished with replacement troops. Thus the danger is that from a small psychological force (that is, a force sent to produce merely moral effect) we might be forced by circumstances to send more and more troops to back up this force. We would thus arrive at dispersion with the added disadvantage of starting without proper organization for the forces which may ultimately be required. If we send a small force it would be wasted; we cannot send a large force without entirely changing our plan for operating on the Western front nor could we get a large force over the Pacific in time to produce any effect."¹

At the time we had no shipping to spare on the Pacific and not enough on the Atlantic to transport and supply a hundred thousand men for Pershing.

It was Pershing's position that Bliss kept in mind. He had the imagination to put himself in another's place. Out of his own experience with the contradictions of Allied advice and his understanding of the swift change of tactics and situation he envisioned Pershing's difficulties as one sound reason why Pershing should have unrestricted authority. Later Bliss said in tapping his recollection in answer to an inquiry:

"It was after General Pershing left that Marshal Joffre had a confidential interview at the War College with the President of the War College, the Chief of Staff, and myself. At this interview he described in the most grave manner the depressed condition of French national morale. He insisted that the main object of his own personal mission would be accomplished with the arrival in France with General Pershing of 'one small American division' showing the American flag in Paris. He said that it made no difference whether this division was properly organized or not; that the main thing was to show the American uniform on American

¹ Letter to Julius Kahn, Representative in Congress from California, August 4, 1917.

soldiers in France.

"At this interview I reminded him of the necessary slowness with which we would get our troops into training camps; would get them clothed, equipped and trained; and I then asked him whether the exaltation of French national spirit that he anticipated would be aroused by the arrival of the first 'small division' would not be followed by an even greater depression when the French people realized that that small division, instead of being the advance guard of a continuously arriving column, was not to be followed by any more for an indefinite time. At this he hesitated for a moment and then said, in substance, 'Well, perhaps it will be desirable to send a couple more such divisions at proper intervals in order to keep up that French spirit. But,' he added, 'you can then take your time in training your troops.'

"In short, nobody then knew when our troops would be ready nor what their organization was to be."¹

In the cable of July 6 we had Pershing's own view that the morale we must supply was a million combatant troops. This was simple to the lay mind. But its very important corollary in adjustment of the home plan, which was not so simple to the lay mind, would be his plan of technical organization, the size of companies, battalions, regiments, brigades, divisions, corps and armies, the number of smaller units in each larger unit, and the character and strength of auxiliaries, which were most suitable for us in warfare on the western front. Here Pershing was not only subject to Allied advice, but to the discussions of his own staff of experts.

On July 21, two weeks after Pershing's call for a million men and possibly a million in addition, Bliss wrote to Kuhn, President of the War College:

"The ideas of General Pershing and his officers are rapidly changing as to the divisional organization they require. . . . It would seem that the only practicable way now is to let our divisions go to camp as originally contemplated and after they are shaken down, direct the Division Commanders to proceed with the formation of a division within their respective commands as having the organization that the Commanding General in France desires."²

Joffre had told our staff that we should make a division of the same size as that of the French, 17,000-18,000, which was practically

¹ Letter to Major General E. F. McGlachlin, November 14, 1921.

² War College Division Records, 8481-28.

that of all major European armies. Late in July tables came from France, not only providing for the 250-man company but for a division one and a half times the numbers of the European. Within two weeks our first series of officers' training camps would turn out their first twenty-five thousand graduates to receive commissions, and already the material for our divisional cantonments was ordered, the plans drawn, the space allotted, and building begun in some instances on the basis of the European division. Our regular divisions were in camp and our National Guard divisions were in camp or having their camps prepared.¹

In general the new organization was the one Bliss had favored before our entry into the war, but he had been for the European size of division. However, it was Pershing who was to form the army for combat, who was on the ground where it was to fight, and had evidently learned that special conditions applied in our Lorraine sector for us which did not apply to the European armies. His decision became the War Department's, without a single reminder to him, when he had troubles enough of his own, of the difficulties entailed in other major arrangements than adapting the camps to the enlarged division. All was accepted in the course of a non-military nation's determination to make a military machine of the first rank. As Bliss wrote in a letter after the war:

"It involved first of all the breaking up of our National Guard organizations so that they could fit in with his recommendations. This led to a long and most harassing struggle with the Governors of nearly all the states, supported by the National Guard officers, against the necessary breaking up and reorganizing of the National Guard."²

And at the time of the controversies:

"I am a Pennsylvanian, myself, and have always taken the greatest pride in National Guard organizations. I have served with them repeatedly and think I fully understand their feelings. But the reorganization is controlled by all-compelling military necessity. . . . In effecting this absolutely necessary reorganization the problem that has confronted each division commander has been, among other things, to reorganize nine regiments of infantry of a certain strength each into four regiments of

¹ *Newton D. Baker: America at War.* Palmer. I, 254.

² Letter to Major General E. F. McGlachlin, November 14, 1921.

infantry of double that strength. This makes it absolutely necessary that the personnel of five regiments must be absorbed in the remaining four. . . . Certainly the division commanders who were appointed by the governors of their states are better able to do this than anyone from the War Department. . . . And the divisions which are to be left at home will be the ones least ready to go abroad.”¹

And to Senator Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania: ²

“I am afraid that it will be entirely impossible to intervene in the case of a single company. . . . I sincerely trust that the gentlemen who compose the historic company to which you refer will take the patriotic view of the matter, and if they want to get into the war allow themselves to be organized for the purpose.”

And to his old army friend, Barry:

“Every organization which has to be broken up or amalgamated with some other is protesting and unloading on the War Department Governors, Congressmen and State officials who can with difficulty be made to understand that without the new organization the division cannot go to France. . . . We will not have this trouble with the National Army because those men do not come to us with a legal organization which has to be modified later. . . . My solution of the whole difficulty is to get the army to France as rapidly as we can, clothe it and reasonably equip it, and conduct its principal training there. . . . I believe that a month’s training there would be equal to three months here. They would be in the very atmosphere of war. Their training would be conducted almost within the sound of the guns. They would not have their friends and relatives swarming about the camps. They could and would work from morning until night, because they would feel that at any moment they were up against the real thing. Even if not fully equipped they might as well train there with deficient equipment as here. More than that, I believe that the moral effect of the presence of a million or a million and a half of our men on French soil would have a greater moral effect on the morale of the Germans than if they knew the same number were over here being slowly put into shape to fight.”³

But how to get them to France? When Baker turned to the Shipping Board or to the Allies he got little encouragement. Receptivity to sound professional advice did not include the means to apply it.

Nor could Bliss, as their chief, make all the regular officers happy

¹ Letter to Governor Martin G. Brumbaugh of Pennsylvania, October 23, 1917.

² Letter, October 8, 1917.

³ Letter to Major General Thomas H. Barry, September 28, 1917.

in a military enterprise in which the professionals had a measure of authority never accorded to them before in our history. Their professional philosophy, which held that there must be regulars drilling and organizing the recruits at home as well as leading them at the front, did not apply individually when they looked seaward where comrades were on transports bound for France. They had been trained for war and the war was "over there." When the national color of fashion had become khaki and insignia indicated rank in that world, so rapid was the advancement in the expansion of our forces that no sooner was a colonel's eagle at home on a major's shoulder than a brigadier's star took its place.

By what system would promotions be made? Under the old system it would have been in order of rank on the list, the weak mounting with the strong to bear the burden of an unprecedented strain. This time the abstract ideal of promotion by selection was applied in practice. Their regular superiors decided who was fittest among the officers from civil life who went through the mill of the officers' training camps. The civilian Secretary of War, who had forsworn all the old influences of favoritism through political or other influential outside channels, also turned the strictly professional problem of the promotion of the regulars to command the new National Army over to the regulars who knew the regulars. A committee of four, with Bliss as chairman, was appointed to make the selections. He shared the loss of old friendships with the members of the board who not only took into consideration an officer's past record but how fit he was physically and mentally to be jumped into the command of ten to twenty-five thousand men, when he had never before commanded five hundred. There were inevitable complaints to Bliss, which included those from the wives of old officer friends. He covered the subject in this memorandum,

"A list was first prepared by the War College of the General Staff of all officers by grades and arms of the service. This list was placed in the hands of four general officers who scrutinized it as carefully as was in their power to do. A list was finally made up of those on which this committee unanimously agreed for recommendation to the Secretary of War. The committee may have made mistakes. It is a human weakness to do so. And I have never heard of a general officer being appointed when the friends of the many who failed to receive the promotion did not think

that a mistake was made. But by the method adopted it is fair to assume that fewer mistakes were made than would have occurred had the recommendations been made by one man not gifted with the power of omniscience.

"It goes without saying that good men were passed by. But the real question is 'were the best men passed by?' There were not enough places for all the good men. The committee had the invidious task, the most unpleasing one that could have been imposed on any group of officers, of deciding who, out of an abundance of good men, should be recommended. The committee had its own differences of opinion. Had each member of it submitted a separate list of recommendation these lists would undoubtedly have largely agreed but in respect to some names each would have differed from the others. An interested officer whose name appeared on one of the lists would have said that list was a wise one. Had it appeared on none of them he would have said they were all wrong. The committee wisely decided to be guided by the rule of unanimity.

"If we are going to have a real war,—other than a siege and capture by storm of the public treasury,—a war in the trenches and on the battlefield, there are many more appointments yet to be made. And of the generals thus far appointed, whose appointment unfortunately could not be dictated by a superhuman knowledge and wisdom, some will probably come back in the discard. That is the experience of all wars. War develops weaknesses unsuspected in peace; and, in many cases, strength and ability equally unsuspected. Every good colonel has his future in his own hands. None of them has a right to complain of injustice because his name was not included in the appointments first made. He may complain of it if, after demonstrating his fitness in active service, during the present war, which he has an opportunity to do if he is able to do it, he should be still passed over."

In further explanation to an objector he wrote:

"I began at the top of the list but passed over every name that I did not consider fit for service in the field *in this war*. I passed over the ones that had a colorless record. . . . When two names appeared equally good, but one of them was that of an officer approaching retiring age, I passed it over (just as I would recommend mine to be in a similar case) in favor of the younger one. . . . If I could have done what I considered preëminently desirable, I would not as a rule have recommended a general officer over 45 years of age nor a colonel over 40; but that was impossible.

"Unfortunately, the Regular Army either does not know the rules that governed us or it does not approve them. Every man whose name is

passed over regards himself as wantonly humiliated. I know of no remedy."¹

The philosopher of Athenian inclinations had turned Spartan in keeping with this spirit.

"In making the *temporary* assignments and promotions in the National Army for the purposes of this war no regular officer has any claim, as a matter of right, to any assignment of promotion. The interests of no individual will receive the slightest consideration where they conflict with the slightest assumed interest of the Government. . . . On proper recommendation and after due investigation such commission in the case of any officer held not to be qualified for his position in the National Army will be revoked. . . . Relative rank of today will not be the slightest clue to relative rank of tomorrow."

To the disappointed and the friends of the disappointed he made the point that every one of the officers passed over "will still have his chance and excellent chance. It makes no difference whether the list was the same or a different one. Questions would be asked why those names which did not appear on it were not there."²

In the same strain he wrote to his friend General Bell:

"The men who go out with regiments are the men who will win high places by demonstrated fitness. Many men will get divisions and brigades who are good men to train their commands to go abroad. But I doubt if they themselves will go." [This was to be the fate of Bell himself, who was not on Pershing's list.] "It's the men who go as colonels (if not too old) who will get high commands six months after our part in the real war begins."³

In example there was Napoleon's saying that every soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack; and there was the precedent of the rise of the youngsters in the Civil War.

It occurred to few that the scholar, himself, wished for the youth which would give him a soldier's chance, the while he labored sixteen hours a day to prepare others to make the most of the chance. But this appears in his "I wish I were young enough to have a regiment" in the letter to Bell. It appears in another letter in which he

¹ Memorandum for the Adjutant General, August 29, 1917.

² Letter to Judge George Gray, August 28, 1917.

³ To Major General J. Franklin Bell, October 12, 1917.

said "The National Army cantonments have been a perfect nightmare to me"—as an incident of his troubles.

"One of the most heart-breaking things about my position is the appeals from every organization and officer, wherever stationed, to be assured of getting actively into the war. God knows I would put everyone there, including myself, if it could be done."¹

¹ Letter to Major General Harry C. Hale, October 12, 1917.

XVIII

HIS FOURTH STAR

OUR first casualties were not at the front but in preparing to get an army to the front. When exhaustion and frustration were making rapid eliminations in the deadly heat of the summer of 1917 in Washington, the frequent whisper "He's cracking" was not heard about the human mountain of Scott's analogy. Mountains do not collapse from nervous prostration.

Bliss' astounding mental and physical endurance, for one of his years, qualified him as one of the elders who wear juniors down. They are the survivors of the hardening processes of past great tests which fortify them for the present great test which, in turn, is making its selection from the young men who come fresh to it on the recommendation of creditable performance in previous minor tests.

Bliss had the advantage of objectiveness in bearing the strain; of not confusing his ego with the cosmos which is often the undoing of the indispensable man, and of the ambitious man who finds that cosmos in such a stampede, as that upon the War Department in 1917 may engulf him instead of providing him with a ladder.

When one looks back at the files of the newspapers in 1917 it seems odd, considering his position, that Bliss should have received so little public attention, and the more so when his distinctive character should have been a source of pithy copy for the press which was avid for anything about leading war personalities. He made the office of Chief of Staff an impersonal institution.

Officers who had served with him often wondered how Bliss kept fit since he took little exercise when he had not the leisure to indulge his fondness for walking. Graves continued to warn him that he could not keep on drawing on his reserves without stopping unless he stretched his muscles. This might have been a more convincing argument if it had occurred to him that it was important in the large scheme of affairs whether his successor came to-day or to-morrow. Finally Graves did win his qualified assent to a horseback ride.

"I will if you will, Graves. You need it more than I do"—as if he were doing Graves a favor at the prospect of much discomfort to himself. Since he had not been on a horse for months, the discomfort the next day was so much worse than during the ride that he concluded this would do for him until the war was over.

"We'll walk hereafter," he told Graves, with the brusqueness of a superior which excluded a further approach to this tiresome and painful subject on the part of a subordinate. So they returned to their previous routine.

In the late afternoon when Bliss saw that he could escape for an hour from his desk, or was determined that he would, anyhow, he would appear in Graves' office. Graves knew the signs at once, whether it was to be a soliloquy first or the club at once. If a soliloquy, Bliss began the talk on his own. As he paced back and forth he would free his mind about this folly of sending millions of youth to death—but they must be sent—or about some recent administrative absurdities for which another form of weakness in the human race of which he was so fond was responsible. This made him feel better.¹

Or he might turn bolt to arguing out a problem of the moment. At first, when he did, and Graves put in an idea of his own, Bliss rarely appeared to hear him, but at length Graves learned the working of Bliss' mind well enough not to waste his suggestions. When he made one that he thought had not occurred to Bliss or he had not dismissed, Bliss would stop short with a bluff, "What's that, Graves?" He listened for Graves' exposition, asked questions, the soliloquy became a discussion. Then, having had enough on the subject, Bliss would say:

"Graves, let's go over to the club."

On the way Bliss might quote from the philosophers and poets, who had nothing to do with the forming of armies, or point out the trees in the parks, many of which are not indigenous, and give their names with their home countries. They were still growing, war or no war. This one had grown enormously since he first knew it back in Grover Cleveland's time, but this old friend had not done so well. It did not like being an expatriate, it did not find the Washington soil agreeable. Some of those tree experts in the Department

¹ Major General W. S. Graves to the author.

of Agriculture ought to give it a pick-me-up.

At the club Bliss always insisted upon shaking dice to see who should pay for a drink, and then after a chat, much refreshed, and most triumphant if destiny had favored him in the shake, he was ready to proceed in lucid comprehension with the nation's affairs.

New faces with new problems and new plans were ever appearing before his desk. There were already problems enough. Maybe the new plans were excellent, but the basic plan had been made; we must hold to that and to its problems, not further confuse it by changes or substitutions which would make for more problems.

When all his experience said "No" on a hot day, he was not always in a mood for listening. Raymond Fosdick was the subject of an eruption. He took it for granted that Fosdick was another busybody of an evangelist and dreamer who wanted to expand an already encompassing bureaucratization by abstract moralization and tract distribution and an extra force in the camps, and would oppose prophylaxis or anything that recognized that the soldier could not have his human failings replaced by an angel's wings. When he learned that he had jumped to a conclusion from past precedents, and that Fosdick was a practical expert in the subject who proposed a combination of all the welfare organizations in a harmonious system of healthful relaxation and games for the soldier off duty,¹ Bliss' receptivity had the customary warmth after he had found that he had been under a false impression. A way to win his friendship was to convince him that he had been wrong.

The best approach to him officially was with your feet on the earth and no one knew this better than the old hands in the army family who had been among Root's young men and were now the elders around Baker. There were Major General Enoch H. Crowder, who directed the draft, and Major General John Chamberlain, the Inspector General for whom Bliss had such deep affection. The old hands could realize his difficulties. They did not have to be told that you cannot prepare for war over the week-end and win it on Monday.

He still had clusters of papers around him, with fresh batches

¹ Fosdick to the author.

being placed at his elbow in spite of his recommendations upon our entry into the war to regulate the flow.

"Every day there is brought to the desk of the Chief of Staff a mass of papers relating to the expenditure of Quartermaster funds, varying from a few of considerable importance to a majority of trifling importance. These papers are all passed upon by local authorities before reaching the office of Quartermaster General. They are there carefully scrutinized and revised. They are finally submitted by him to the Adjutant General, who makes a brief of the whole case, whether they are matters involving an expenditure of fifty dollars or one hundred thousand dollars and submits them to the Chief of Staff with a recommendation for approval prepared for his signature. The papers then go to the Assistant Secretary of War for final approval.

"In time of peace it is possible that the Chief of Staff had time to give some consideration to the question as to whether the allotment would be made to repair a roof on a set of quarters or barracks, to repair a stable that had fallen down, etc. It is entirely impossible to do so now and the signature of the Chief of Staff on such papers means nothing."¹

Baker would correct this delay, but the abuse might continue or reappear in another form, in the days before we had a budget system, when the Congress had imposed so many restraints in expenditures which had led to regulations which became gospel dogma. If reform were hastened too rapidly it developed that peculiar and artful protective bureaucratic passive resistance which was inherent in its veteran exponents who were still the instructors of the new personnel in paper routine.

Those who were sceptical about Bliss as a modern executive, as they tried to speed administrative detail when he kept on mowing away the documentary hay, were in turn amazed by his continued power of concentration. Then, as they heard a flash of wisdom from him or his clear exposition of a major issue out of the variety of his knowledge and experience, they would conclude that he was a grand person, whether a modern executive or not, and it was good to have a solid peak in sight when the rest of the range was careening. He was not given to the quick-fire of snap judgments which missed the target. Just when he seemed to be nodding and lost in detail, he lifted you up to the peak and revealed the plain and the

¹ Memorandum to Baker, October 26, 1917.

movements clear before his eyes, and then muttered, "More damned papers!"

So, in intervals of orientation, he summoned the picture of the whole to guide him, perhaps in one of the heart to heart talks with Baker, or perhaps in a soliloquy late at night at home before his hours of sleep of which he required so few. Occasionally he would take an afternoon off in a trip with Baker to see how the drafted men were getting on at Camp Meade. After the day's work was done, which was often not until the early morning of the next day, a group frequently would gather in Baker's office. A last question or two might be decided. Then Bliss, who would have to sign no more papers or state the obvious again until after breakfast, sharing mental relaxation with Baker in turning from specific duties to general ideas, would expand in congenial company.

Baker caught his historic and classic references on the wing and gave winged replies. There were moments when Frederick Keppel, who had been dean of Columbia University, had his scholarship tested; when Bliss' fresh interest in a subject left Ralph Hayes, the youngest of the group, feeling rather old, and when Fosdick as a humanist felt that he was sitting at the feet of the master of his own subject.

Bliss' yarning could bring laughter from the others, but he himself was never given to laughing aloud. The mountain only trembled in merriment, and when a mountain trembles it may be said to be emotional. That twitch of his lip, the spreading smile, the way that he put his hand up to his mustache showed that he was completely absorbed in his enjoyment of the fun. On these occasions he was a touchstone of conversation. He was a monologist only in his soliloquies.

When the autumn leaves were falling two more stars descended on his shoulder from the hand of Congress, making four. In the expansion of the army and the upward grading of rank, the Commander-in-Chief in France and the Chief of Staff had been made temporary generals. Their rank was related to their official positions. We had never given it permanently except for victory, and only to Washington, Grant, Sherman and Sheridan. The victory was yet to be won.

We had reason to believe in October, 1917, that it was far from near; that, indeed, it must rest with the new army we were forming to strike the final, shattering blow. The only relief in the dark outlook from abroad had come from the sea front. Sinkings by the U-boats, which had risen so rapidly early in the year, were on the slow decrease.

In spite of progress against the submarine danger the stock of the world's ships continued to decrease while war demands for transport increased; sinkings were far in excess of new building. It had become more evident that we must build our own ships to transport our army to France and maintain it there; and the larger the army the more ships we must build.

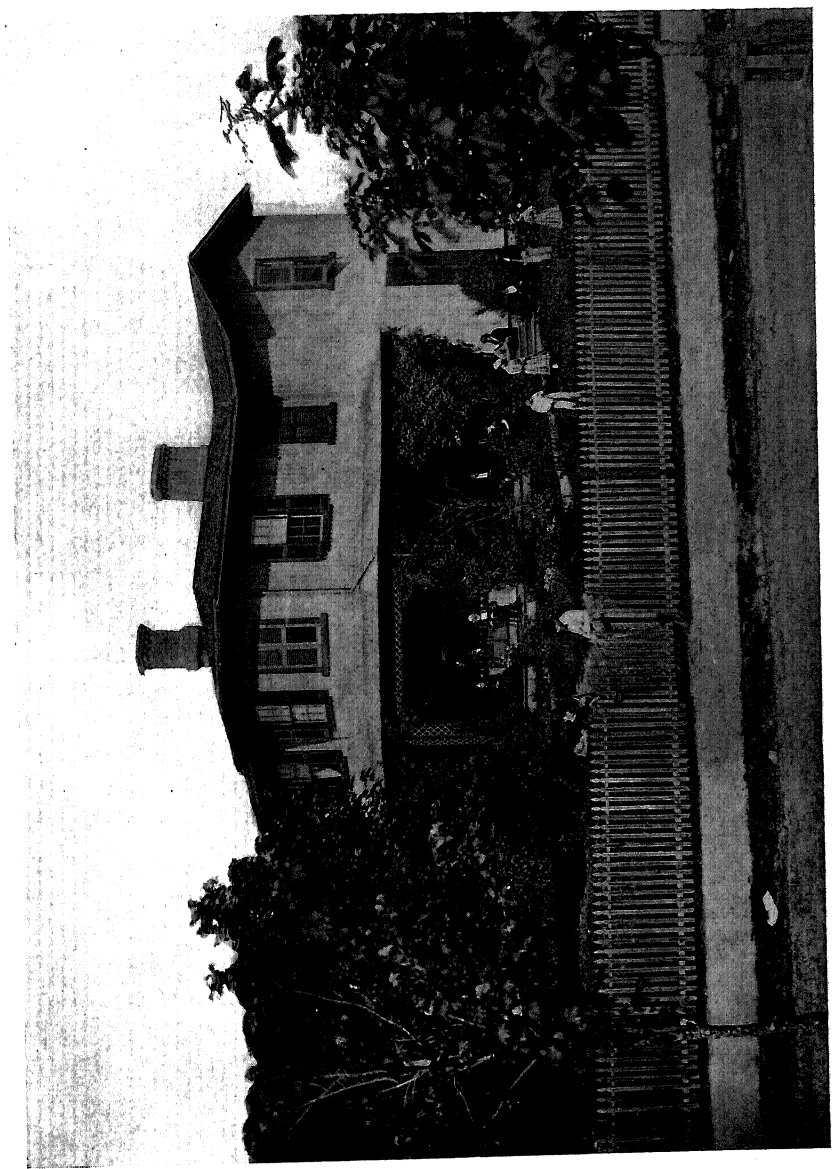
Industrial requirements expanded in all directions. Pershing had found Allied resources for his aid more limited than his estimate from early information. At first he could foresee his needs only in the rough. They became more enormous as they became more concrete, as did those of all our enterprises at home.

Our national wish could not be father to prompt achievement. War's maw was more omnivorous than we had expected. The anticipated public impatience with what appeared to be slow progress had come. The undeveloped negative of the whole made no picture, but only blots and blurs that seemed unconnected.

We could not shell out Liberty motors as though they were peas, or build ships as fast as automobiles. We had to build the plants to build the ships, and a ship plant could not be put up overnight like a tent. American ambition, in the full swing of our old pioneering confidence, had set out to do miracles. It might do them, but this did take time.

The multitudinous projects were hampered for want of material, which the over-burdened railroads could not deliver on time if it could be produced on time. Some new and unexpected project became more vital than one already under way. Each captain of industry thought his was the vital one to win the war. The calls for priority and coördination became a rumbling chorus in the land for which constituents relied on the members to be the public spokesmen when the Congress assembled.

"We have been going through the same ordeal that your people passed through sometime ago," Bliss wrote to an English friend,



THE BLISS HOME IN LEWISBURG (FATHER AND MOTHER SEATED ON THE PORCH)

"the ordeal that will try to the very quick a nation which believes that it will never get into a war until it is actually in it, and which has made no real preparation in anticipation of the possibility of it." ¹

In another letter he wrote:

"If we could only have made the little beginning that we tried to get Congress to authorize it would have aided us immensely in the preparations we are now making because at least the initial steps would have been taken before the emergency came and things would have been given a shunt in the right direction. However, I do not complain." [He hoped that the army] "would soon be in a condition to render service that will force a lasting peace and make unnecessary the raising of such another army for a long time to come." ²

And in forming that army Bliss had held to the original plan, never drawn off on side roads from the straight track to the goal. He had followed the sound system on immortal and proven principles. And confused as the development on the negative seemed to the public eye, the blots and the blurs would yet appear integrated in a composite picture, from which Baker, who was responsible for the whole, could not be diverted by the conflicts of advice and of pressure.

The million were in the cantonments which had been built in ninety days. The draft, which many had thought would repeat the riots and individual resistance in the Civil War, had worked smoothly. We were sure of our flow of men and of officers to train them.

Bliss, now within two months of retirement, was far from quarreling with the idea, which he himself approved, that his successor should be a younger man, brought home from service in France where he would have become familiar with Pershing's problems to drive the machine that had been made. If his usefulness were over, and he was not kept on active service, why there were many subjects which he did not know about and which he might study. He could improve his Greek; there must be good detective stories he had not yet read.

If Baker should send him to the Philippines to count coconuts,

¹ To Hon. Wilfred Powell, October 14, 1917.

² To Charles S. Diehl, October 24, 1917.

there would be no demur; orders were orders, as his father had taught him before he learned this at West Point; and these would be Baker's orders. And Baker was the great wise chief whom he "loved more than any man on earth."¹ If he were to count coconuts, then he would count as many as the next man and count them accurately, and there must be much that was interesting to learn about coconuts.

But, again, destiny appeared with a task for which the sage of the army was the obvious man. Partly our own coördination had been hampered by the lack of it among our European Allies. From our distance, which further hampered coöperation, each appeared to be fighting on his own. Members of the Allied missions in America were privately critical of our plan but still disagreeing in their recommendations.

Even the restrictions of the censorship, and its handmaiden of propaganda, had not altogether concealed from our people the growing solicitude which stirred their impatience, while such dependable inside news as our government received often augmented apprehension over the confused outlook.

Russia was unmistakably out of the war for good; the Italian offensive had been stalled after slight gains which were evidently being yielded for more secure winter dispositions; the French had kept strictly on the defensive all summer; the British, taking the arrows to their breasts to relieve the weary French after their heavy punishment in their Spring offensive, had made no decisive progress in their hammering blows at Passchendaele, and the minor Allies were pleading for more loans and material from us to enable them to hold their lines.

In response to the evident need it was decided to send a mission of experts abroad in the hope of tying the loose and flying ends of the Allied partnership together. Led by Colonel E. M. House, President Wilson's closest political and diplomatic adviser, its heads were Oscar Crosby, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and Paul D. Cravath, finance; Vance McCormick, embargo and blockade; Bainbridge Colby, shipping; Alonzo Taylor, food administration; Thomas Nelson Perkins, priority; and Admiral W. S. Benson, the navy. Clearly, the military counselor ought to be the one familiar

¹ Bliss to the author.

with our whole army plan from the start, Bliss. At 4 A. M., October 28, he wrote to Baker:

"I hoped to say *au revoir* to you this afternoon. But you had gone before I reached the office. I beg of you to take care of your health. It seems to me that the whole burden of the nation is being carried by you. And with all of that tremendous responsibility you have an equal responsibility to keep yourself able to bear it. You can snap your fingers and get an officer to replace any other one. The very nature of their work makes them interchangeable. But there is no similarity between your work and that of any other man in the country. If you had to be replaced he who replaced you would have months of work to fit himself to take up the work where you laid it down. And you know that that means disaster. Therefore, I again say, take care of yourself.

"When I find myself getting a bit nervous about the somewhat (as yet) vague mission on which I am going I brace myself up again by thinking of your splendid example of devotion to work and duty. It is true, what I heard a Bureau Chief say, 'If anything goes wrong with the War Department it will be the fault of everybody except the Secretary of War.' I pray God to stay up your hands till the sun of this war has set."

The bulletins from Italy, which had begun arriving two days ago, just as it was supposed that all the armies were settling down into stationary positions for the winter, did not promise that the sun of victory would set very soon for the Allies in the southern Alps. A powerful Austro-German offensive had struck the Italian army by surprise, and the movement of its converging flanks looked very threatening.

XIX

A MISSION ABROAD

THE chief who had been a fixture at his desk for sixteen hours a day had suddenly disappeared, leaving no word as to his destination. The only explanation from Baker, or from General John Biddle who was now acting in Bliss' place, was that Bliss would be absent for some time. In such instances of mystery it must be taken for granted that he had gone "over there."

His baggage and his sheafs of reports of our war preparation from various chiefs, and time and quantity estimates of future progress were packed; and he was sitting with Mrs. Bliss waiting the ring of the doorbell. A naval officer appeared with a closed car, and the navy, in its sober responsibility for the safe transit of the mission, slipped Bliss under the cloak of a sea fog of secrecy. He began the first instalment of his first letter nearly three hours later "On Board Special Train—55 minutes north of Baltimore," with an exactitude which was in keeping with the humorous appeal of all the care and time occupied in keeping any enemy spies from picking up his trail.

"I don't suppose I can post this before we leave, but I'll begin it as a sort of diary, hoping that you will get it sometime. After we left the house, about 8.10 this evening, we zigzagged about town until I was dizzy. But I got my bearings when we reached the point where you turn from Maryland Avenue into the road to Laurel that we took going to Camp Meade. But instead of taking the Baltimore Pike to Laurel we went out the road that takes you to the farm where the Water Lily farms are.

"Beyond that I lost my bearings. But finally we came to Kensington and then followed Kensington Avenue. We passed through a little place called Tuxedo and ten minutes or so after that we crossed a bridge over a railroad track. At the far end a couple more motors were waiting. We got out and carried our luggage down a flight of stairs and found ourselves on a short platform. No houses seemed to be in sight and no persons except those of our party assembled on the platform. It was too dark to see who they were, but finally I ran into Admiral Benson and his aide, Lt. Carter, and also Mr. Crosby, Asst. Sec'y of the Treasury.

How we got there I don't know. . . . We backed and filled and doubled on our tracks (on the second motor journey) for half an hour or more before we reached the little station where we took the train. . . . I'll learn more about it tomorrow. . . .

"We are on our way to Halifax where we go by two American cruisers, convoyed by torpedo boats and with more torpedo boats to join us en route.

"Thursday, Nov. 1, 1917.

"We reached Halifax Tuesday morning, October 30, about 9.30 o'clock. The trip had been somewhat stupid because we were locked up all the time. Most of the time all curtains were drawn and always at night as soon as it came time to turn on the electric lights. At the stops we could not get out to stretch our legs. The train ran 'without orders,' that is, no schedule had been arranged. At each division headquarters we were met by a railroad official (two that I met were the assistant general passenger agents of the road) who know nothing except that they were to run the train from station to station without a collision. So at each station they learned that the track was clear and so ran us through. In that way they expected to keep even the railroad people from knowing anything more than that a 'special' was going through.

"At Halifax our train was stopped on the track on the side of a hill just above a dock at which one of our men-of-war was lying. It was on the train that I learned that we were to go abroad in two men-of-war, the *Huntington* and the *St. Louis*, with a destroyer named the *Balch* after the old admiral of that name. . . . The party was divided up, Col. House, his wife, his secretary and maid, Mr. Auchincloss, Mr. Vance McCormick, Admiral Benson and Major Wallace going on the *Huntington*, the rest on the *St. Louis*. . . .

"It seems that the *Huntington* and the *St. Louis* left New York for Halifax with orders which made them think they were to go in search of a couple of German raiders that are supposed to have gotten out of the North Sea into the Atlantic. They did not know until a half hour before our arrival that they were to carry unknown passengers to an unknown destination.

"We have been making only from 10 to 12 knots. It seems that they want to reach the danger zone when there is no moon. So we are to loaf along until we reach the oil tanker *Arethusa* in mid-ocean where our destroyer renews her supply of oil-fuel. Then we are to hit it up because by that time there will be no moon.

"Sunday, Nov. 4, 1917.

"There are 1100 men—or boys, rather, for they are all very young—two or three hundred of them are under instructions as 'lookouts,' gun crews, etc., and are drafted off from time to time to go on the transports,

merchant ships, destroyers. Certainly the ship is well protected with lookouts. They are in groups all around the ship, with three groups on the mast, one very near the top, one about half-way up and one not far above the citadel. Small telescopes are mounted on boards fastened to the rail of the ship. Each one traverses through a certain small arc and the lookout is constantly on the watch for anything covered by that arc. Two telescopes cover the same arc. We have been getting radio messages from all sorts of sources, German, French, English and the U. S. After deciphering them they are typewritten and passed around the ship. Day before yesterday we caught a message announcing the torpedoing of the *Finland*. Last night we worked our own wireless for the first time. They have avoided it because of the danger of giving our position to our 'friends.' But the weather has been so foggy that Captain Robinson was afraid of losing the *Arethusa* in the darkness added to the fog. So he sent her a message to move to the eastward on our course to a point where we could expect to pick her up about 8 this morning. . . .

"Tuesday, November 6, 1917, 4 P. M.

"We have had a rather harassing 24 hours. At 4 P. M. yesterday we entered what they call, from the latest warnings (radioed to the ship), the danger zone. Everybody was then ordered to put on life preservers and to keep them on until we reached port! One of the officers came and laced mine on and uncomfortable enough I found it. I have had it on just 24 hours and we have about 30 hours more of it according to the present reckoning.

"Yesterday afternoon it cleared up cold with a strong northwest wind blowing. It helps us on our way and gives a tremendous roll, but they all seem to like it because it is bad weather for submariners. The destroyer flotilla coming out to meet us from the other side began calling us last night about 250 miles away. We had a heavy sea behind us, they were bucking against it and it delayed them for they were late in reaching us. We met them about 8 this morning. First, one was seen on the horizon coming from the southeast, then another one more to the south. As they approached, they were scarcely visible for the foam that covered them from end to end. I did not suppose a boat could roll so much without turning turtle. The third one came up an hour later from the southwest. They had scattered over a wide area to find us."

The sight of the destroyers spoke good news which was an offset for the bad news from Italy to the man who had chosen to go to the Naval Academy but could not get the appointment. An inside truth of the Allied situation which we had learned immediately after our entry into the war had been revealed in the frank sailor-to-sailor talk by Admiral Sir John Jellicoe upon the arrival of

Admiral W. S. Sims in London.¹

Reports for public consumption that the sinkings were on the decrease were true as to numbers, but the total tonnage of sinkings was increasing at a rate so far in excess of new building that it was only a question of time before the continuance of the present rate would force Britain to yield for the want of food and munitions.

The arrival of our first division of destroyers, their crews fresh and young for the war, in May, 1917, assured their British comrades, after nearly three years of strain, that the former neutral, who had once written firm notes of protest against the blockade, would now fight to enforce it and to clear the sea of the menace to shipping which had brought us into the war. We had sent more destroyers and further naval reinforcements; we were hastening the building of sub-chasers and new destroyers. The additional pressure we had brought to bear had convinced the stubborn, gallant and independent British merchant captains to mobilize in groups at the edge of the danger zone for convoy to port. This and the new method of the depth charges were so effective that sinkings were on the decrease and danger of starvation of Britain by siege was past. Under destroyer escort passage now seemed reasonably secure for our army to France. Our navy was winning its war, which it must do, before our army could win its war.

Bliss' interest in the depth charges, which he saw for the first time, was communicated to Mrs. Bliss with the usual detail in explaining anything novel to him, which he took for granted would be novel to her.

"Wednesday, Nov. 7, 1917, 2.45 P. M.

"I saw a group of men arranging on the deck near the stern a row of bright metallic cases shaped like this [with a drawing]. They told me they were 'depth charges' for sinking submarines. If a submarine is sighted, the method of attack is to drive the ship straight at it. Of course the 'sub' at once submerges. When the ship reaches the approximate point where the 'sub' went down they drop two of these 'depth charges' over the stern by two chutes that are arranged for the purpose. The case containing the charge is in two parts very lightly connected together. 'A' is heavy, containing about 52 or 53 pounds of TNT. 'B' is simply a hollow case which detaches itself the moment the case strikes the water. A cord connects 'B' with 'A'. 'A' sinks, 'B' floats. When 'A' has gone down

¹ *The Victory at Sea*, Sims.

the length of the cord, the latter fires a primer in the 'tri-nitro' and explodes the charge. So the depth of the explosion is regulated by the length of the cord. These are regulated for 40 feet. They are said to be fatal to a submarine anywhere within 80 feet by crushing in her sides or starting her rivets. I was glad to see that they were lashing these cases mighty fast. They would not be pleasant things to break loose, and go rolling about the deck.

"The night was the most disagreeable I have ever had at sea. I sat up until 2 A.M. reading. Once or twice I went to the stateroom and found Admiral Benson asleep in a chair braced athwartship. It was impossible to stay in a fore and aft bed. In the Captain's cabin where I was reading I braced my chair in the corner of the bulkhead and the desk and managed to hold on. Pretty soon the big reflecting light over the table came down with a crash. All the crew, including the stewards, were kept on deck all night, so that there was no one to make things fast. When I turned in at 2 A.M. the cabin was a wreck. All the chairs except mine were overturned and in a confused pile smashing back from one side to the other, mixed up with silver water pitchers, trays, broken glass, books, etc.

"I managed to curl myself up on the bed, knees to chin, lying across the bed. After listening to things smashing all over the ship for an hour I fell asleep, and was awakened by the steward calling me at 8.45.

"It seems that all day we have been in the most dangerous part of the danger zone. I went on the bridge about 9.30 and found the *St. Louis* almost out of sight astern. Then she began blowing off an enormous amount of steam. Something was the matter with her engine. We could not leave her and we dared not lie still to wait for her. So we turned in several great circles and finally learned on getting near that her 'water feed' was not working properly. The little destroyers were in a great flutter darting to and fro for distances of 1000 yards to about 5 miles. Finally the *St. Louis* began to move and we went ahead at 12 knots when we ought to have been making 20."

Before his departure Bliss had not seen President Wilson. As he sat with House over their after-dinner coffee when the weather was moderate, he hoped that House might relieve him of his vagueness about the objects of the mission so he could conform his part to a joint purpose.¹ But House did not bring up the subject. He himself had received no definite instructions and was crossing the Atlantic with an open mind for an exchange of information with the Allies to develop plans which might well be dependent upon the news from Italy.¹

Bliss wrote at midnight, November 7, from London to Mrs. Bliss:

"Have just arrived and will try to finish the story of our trip before going to bed. Just before getting abreast of the Scilly Islands and too far south to see them the flagship of our destroyer flotilla signaled 'danger' and directed the two cruisers to close in abreast of each other. This added protection to one but we could not tell which one! The submarines try to attack a ship on the side. If two are abreast, she can only get one, but alas! we could not tell which side might be attacked. Moreover, two ships abreast and close together can be more easily protected by the destroyers. In this order we continued until about 3.30 P.M. when a black speck above the horizon, changing to white when the sun darting through the squall clouds threw its rays on it, gave us our first glimpse of the Eddystone Lighthouse."

The Americans were met by leading army and navy officers and officials, whose courtesy lost nothing in sincerity as the result of what had happened in Italy while the mission had been on the Atlantic. The truth, beyond what the people had learned from the communiqués, must be kept from them lest it have the same disheartening effect as the truth about the large increase of tonnage sinkings which had greeted Admiral Sims upon his arrival in London eight months ago. And the truth this time was that the Italian army had suffered a disaster which was the more alarming owing to the final confirmation of Russia's complete diversion from further assistance to the Allies by the seizure of the Russian government by the Bolsheviks, November 8, the day after the arrival of our Mission in London. The Italian loss of guns and material was commensurate with their loss of three-quarters of a million effectives. London expected the capture of Venice.¹

British and French statesmen and generals had hurried to Italy to hold up the hands of their Italian colleagues; ten British and French divisions had been rushed to stiffen the defense of the Italians on the banks of the Piave River.

There had been warnings in the late summer of the danger of the Germans turning their forces, which had been released from the eastern front and others mobilized for the western front, toward Italy; and there had been ensuing suggestions that the British and French forestall possible defeat for the Italians. But this ran counter

¹ *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*. Seymour. III, 219.

to the practice of each Ally fighting his own war on his own front.

When the news was good the Allies pulled apart, each bent on safeguarding his own national interests for the victory which their superior numbers and resources seemed to assure them in the end. When the news was bad the Allies pulled together. Unless real co-ordination came they might be in the position of never being able to follow up good news with sufficient unity for a final triumph. The Italian disaster rallied their unity for mutual salvation, the danger ever being that one day there might come so great a reverse it would separate them, each giving his strength strictly to self defense or turning his wits to secret negotiations to make the best terms he could with the enemy.

In the presence of the stricken Italian army and people, the statesmen and generals, meeting November 7 in the little town of Rapallo, formed the Supreme War Council for the future coördination of Allied effort, and then hastened back to London and Paris to meet the American mission and deal with the currents of home opinion rising against administrations that had permitted such a disaster to happen in the fourth year of the war.

There was a dispute as to whether the credit for the creation of the Supreme War Council belonged to Premier Paul Painlevé of France or Prime Minister Lloyd George of Great Britain, but Lloyd George made the most of his claim to paternity, which is generally assigned to him, to save his own government from the fate that was to be Painlevé's as the result of the Italian disaster.

The success of the Supreme War Council must depend upon approval of it and acceptance of membership by the United States. Lloyd George appealed to House to gain the President's support. Bliss pressed vigorously for House to send a cable to the President asking that this be given. House sent the cable, and the President replied that he not only favored the plan but insisted upon it.¹

Lloyd George was concerned lest he meet an adverse vote in the Commons on the unity of control issue as represented by the new Council, but when he announced the President's message in support of it he won the day and made his tenure as Prime Minister secure for the present. The President asked House to attend the next session

¹ *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*. Seymour. III, 219.

of the Council, two weeks later, December 3, in Paris, with Bliss whom House had recommended as military adviser.

It was a week after Bliss' arrival in London before he wrote another line to Mrs. Bliss.

"I used to think that at home I had work to do. But it was a time of pleasant rest compared with what I have had to do in the week just past. . . ."

It had been a week with no bit of really encouraging news; and even at the end of the darkest and most frustrating day of war preparation at home there had always been a bit or two he and Baker might exchange.

A succession of meetings between the experts of the Mission and the British experts ensued as they searched for bases of coördination. Even in war large national bodies move slowly, subject to institutional processes.

And war being the business at hand, the strengthening of the powers for destruction of the enemy the object of all the conferences, the Chief of Staff of the American army was necessarily the supreme expert. Never had he a more complex situation for his analysis, never had his influence been more sought. The statesmen and generals realized, if the public did not, that with Russia out of the war Italy and the minor allies fought to a standstill, Germany would be free now to concentrate all her strength on the Western front in the Spring of 1918.

War shortens human memory even more rapidly than the turns of politics. The early view that the United States could never have an army ready for effective aid in France had been forgotten in the present eager interest in our training camps as the source of manpower to replace the Russian and Italian and fill the widening gaps in the British and French ranks. It soon became evident to the British leaders that Bliss, whom gossip had described as a superannuated chief of staff who had been diverted to a mission to make room for a younger man, was in full possession of extraordinary mental and physical powers, a large and capacious observer cautiously restraining a certain impatience with repetition of the school-boy obvious about military science, a sage who listened and asked

questions but would not commit himself until he had heard sufficient evidence. The sum of his findings will appear later in his report to Baker.

Meanwhile, we shall follow him through his letters to Mrs. Bliss from London and Paris, when social life continued in a war atmosphere which gave its contacts vivid interest if not the leisurely charm of old. American wives of Britons and Frenchmen had a special province for doing their bit in encouraging the leaders of the land of their origin to bring all its strength to bear in support of the land of their adoption. Dim memories of youthful pasts in America were revived; old loyalties were brought out from the closet, brushed and proudly worn again to save the new loyalties from disaster. Peril had repatriated the expatriates.

A chance to meet old English friends interested Bliss more than the functions which he described to Mrs. Bliss. When he reached a point "where I had to stop work pending the receipt of certain information from the War Office," he hurried off to call on the Wilfred Powells.

"They were delighted and I was delighted with their delight. . . . They are mourning for their son who was killed. Their other son is in Flanders, has been twice wounded, and is well. . . . They inquired most eagerly after you and Eleanor and Goring. They spoke most touchingly of the friendship of Goring with their dead son. Mrs. Powell told me how much she admired Eleanor and her plucky work. And they spoke of you with real love. . . .

"Tonight I dined at the House of Commons with Mr. Balfour and a distinguished party that he had invited to meet the Mission. I send you a plan of tables and list of guests and card of invitation as souvenirs. At 5 o'clock this afternoon Mrs. Page, the wife of our Ambassador, had a reception at the Embassy, No. 6 Grosvenor Square, for Admiral Benson and myself. Lots of Americans were there. Mrs. Chamberlain, the widow of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the former Liberal Leader, and who is the daughter of Judge Endicott, who was Secretary of War, when we went to Washington in '88, and Duchesses and Countesses and Lords and Sirs galore."

The student of history mentioned particularly having met the daughter of John Lothrop Motley. "Her husband is an old officer of the British Army and served in the Crimean War. I think he told me there are only six left."

Traveler Bliss had another description of a royal reception for Mrs. Bliss the next day: one when Britain was fighting for her life, which was in notable war-time contrast to that of the ancient court of Spain and the still more ancient court of Japan.

"Today we were presented to the King and Queen and lunched at Buckingham Palace. The affair was quite simple, many formalities being dispensed with during the War. We were ushered into a great reception room at the top of the stairway, on the main front facing St. James' Park. In a few minutes we passed into another room where we were presented to the King, Queen, Princess Mary and the King's second son, the Duke of York. He is in the Navy. The eldest son is in the Army and is now in Italy.

"Then we passed back through the first reception room and into the lunch room. Admiral Benson sat on the King's right, I on his left. He talked in the most animated and affable way. On my left was one of the (I suppose) ladies in waiting who was much interested in hearing all about our trip over.

"After the lunch we went back to our first reception room and had coffee and cigarettes, all standing. The King stood by himself in another part of the room and one of the equerries in waiting would approach a member of the party and say that the King would like to talk with him. As he talked with Admiral Benson and myself all through the lunch he did not send for us. But the principal lady in waiting did the same thing for the Queen. She took Admiral Benson to the Queen and then came and talked with me. But she kept her eye on the Queen.

"I suppose the latter made some sign, though I did not detect it, because in a few minutes she said that the Queen would like to speak with me. As I came up, the Admiral bowed and backed away, and I took his place. We talked about the air raids in London, the work of our Mission, our going to France, etc., and then it came to my turn to bow and retire. Later the same thing was done with the Princess and the young Prince.

"The King wore the uniform of an English admiral, the Queen and her daughter wore mourning (all the ladies were in black) for Prince Christian. All the same she had a necklace of great pearls and a diamond brooch at her throat. The Princess was dressed like any young girl (she did not look more than seventeen) with no ornament whatever. The Duke of York looked quite as young and wore the uniform of a junior naval officer. He told me about the battle of Jutland, in which his ship was engaged. There were various other gentlemen there, Mr. Balfour, Lloyd George and some lords of whom I recognized one as dining with us at the House of Commons last night, Lord Crewe, I think.

"After half an hour of this the Queen and Princess and her brother

moved around the party shaking hands with each one and then withdrew. The King then came over and talked in a very jolly and free way for about 15 minutes. Then he shook hands with all and withdrew. We had been taken to the palace in gorgeous royal carriages and sent home in motor cars."

The chill raw air of London in November had whetted Bliss' appetite, which was commensurate for the ample supply of physical and mental endurance he required as a legate of coördination.

"Is it too late to get something to eat at this hotel?" he asked his aide when he returned from the royal luncheon. "The King talked fast, he ate fast, the plates were removed as soon as he was through with a course, and I was so interested in what he had to say that I got hardly a bite."¹

His next letter to Mrs. Bliss was written the same evening he arrived in Paris, November 22.

"We arrived at the Gare du Nord at 8.30. We left Charing Cross at 11.40 this morning. Reached Dover at 1.15 and left on a British destroyer after 2 P. M., reaching Calais in 55 minutes! The destroyer makes 35 knots an hour. The day was gloomy and foggy. At Dover the destroyer started to go out on one passage through the breakwater and then received a signal to return and go out the other. I think it was intended to land us at Boulogne but this morning they found that a German submarine had planted mines in front of Boulogne and when they discover that they stop all movement to the port until the mine-sweepers have cleared the way. It seems that only this morning the mine-sweepers had cleared the way to Calais. . . . At Paris we were met by a great crowd of people."

Submarine sinkings might be on the decrease, the campaign against the U-boats steadily gaining, but in the unrelenting surface siege against the underwater siege there could be no nodding in the patrol of the channel passage which separated the British army in France from its home base.

"On the 23rd, after calling on our Ambassador, I called on M. Clemenceau who is both Prime Minister and Secretary of War. He speaks English very well. He told me about his life in America from 1865 to 1869. He said he entered Richmond immediately after General Grant. I did not like to ask him what he was doing in America at that time but I

¹ Colonel William B. Wallace to the author.

fancy he was *persona non grata* to Napoleon III and had to leave there for that reason.

"General Pershing, Mr. House and I lunched together and I spent the rest of the day with the former. This day I also called on the two generals who represent General Foch, the Chief of Staff, who is absent in Italy and who ought to be back today. On the 24th I called on M. Pichon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the Sub-Secretary of War and on Marshal Joffre. Then we had lunch with the President where I sat on his left.

"In the evening I went with Mrs. House and a party to the Grand Opera where we heard the opera of *Jeanne d'Arc* given for a Red Cross charity. The British Ambassador, Lord Somebody (I have forgotten his name) came into our box (which was given to us by the French government) and the author of the opera, Mr. Raymond Rozt. He is a son of Marie Rozt and one of his fathers (I think his mother was married lots of times) was Mapleson, the operatic manager. I also met and had a pleasant talk with Madame Waddington whose recollections of diplomatic life you have read. This morning we all went to lay a wreath on the tomb of Lafayette."

The fact that there was nothing further for Mrs. Bliss until November 30 reveals how busy he was, just as, in spite of his fondness for music, his brief and desultory reference to the opera revealed his impatience with extraneous formalities at a time when only one subject, that of sheer self-preservation, should engross the minds of all Allied leaders.

"Yesterday had first session of inter-allied conference. Today have first session of Lloyd George's War Council at Versailles. Am about to leave for there. Hope to start home in a few days. Will know better after to-day's conference."

XX

BRINGING HOME THE TRUTH

ON the day that Bliss arrived in Paris with the American mission the rumblings of French discontent over the Italian disaster broke in a political upheaval which overthrew the Painlevé government. Georges Clemenceau became Premier.

The cheers of the crowd which greeted the members of the mission at the Gare du Nord expressed, as they had on Pershing's arrival in June, the hope for American aid. The fulfillment of this hope was one war policy on which all French political and military leaders could unite in their appeals on the background of official hospitality in rivalry with that of the British.

Bliss, who had been in Paris as captain on his way to Madrid twenty years before, when Europeans thought the United States might get the worst of it in a war with Spain, had become the spokesman for an army which was now mortally needed in France. Instead of looking up the records at Père la Chaise to locate the grave of his wife's ancestor he was a courted four-star general placing a wreath on Lafayette's tomb; instead of counting his pennies to see if he could afford a seat in the gallery he was a guest in the Presidential box at the opera, the harmony of the music dulled by the disharmonies of a coalition at war during the day's conferences.

He would have been out of character as a chief of staff who kept his feet on the earth if he had deceived himself that all the formalities and attentions were not entirely related to his official position, that the audience which looked toward him at the opera was not wondering how many soldiers he could deliver in France to risk their lives for her security. By the same reasoning the British, or they would not have been human, were thinking for Britain's sake.

Members of the American Mission had to deal with French cabinet ministers who had only just been seated at their desks. Clemenceau was far from being called the father of victory at that time. The French public accepted his appointment in the same mood as that

of his predecessors in the war: he embodied the hope that rises with a change in a dark hour. France had gone to the extremes in politics in the choice of that lone old political warrior and iconoclast, whose blade had known no brother in his long siege of criticism of the conduct of the war.

He had been often at the front with his sharp eyes and his familiar cane and cap, confident of his judgments, in keeping with his decisive character. What generals whom he had found stupid would he replace with generals whom he had found competent? He was said to believe in Foch whom Joffre had relieved of command, and was now French chief of staff under Pétain. Would he favor the fledgling Supreme War Council which was accepted as Lloyd George's creation? He had railed against the censorship which the military men held to be so essential to the security of information. Would he liberalize it? Paris was more concerned about these questions for the moment than with the next move of the German army.

At first, Clemenceau and Pétain, the French commander-in-chief, did not think the Supreme War Council workable; but Foch, when he returned from Italy, took a more favorable view, which had its weight with Clemenceau. The censorship continued as before, now that Clemenceau was inside the breastworks and no longer the critic but the object of criticism. Lloyd George stated his view of the value of the Supreme War Council when he said that at the Rome conference, before the Italian disaster, two hours had been spent discussing the position of King Constantine in Greece, which left the busy statesmen only ten minutes to consider the situation on the Italian front.¹ The Council once it was functioning would have the necessary information ready for the statesmen.

Bliss attended the second session of the Council—the one at Rapallo being the first—for preliminary organization at a time when it was being generally disparaged and under the shadow of the Inter-Allied Council which had been called to meet in Paris before the Rapallo agreement. All the eighteen Allies, from Serbia and Greece to China, were represented in the Inter-Allied Council, which divided up into sub-committees, to make their recommendations as how to further unity. This led to the same kind of procrastination in the play of many minds as later at the Peace Conference, while the purpose of

¹ Second Session of the Supreme War Council, December 1, 1917.

the Supreme War Council was a permanent body for unity, which had yet to prove itself. The Inter-Allied Council made certain recommendations, among them one for an Inter-Allied Tonnage Commission.

The technical points which had been raised were subject to further conferences between the American and British and French experts. Since the truth of the American situation was essential to a true picture of the whole, the statesmen and generals, in considering policy, sought from our Chief of Staff the actual state of our preparations from camp to factories and to get an approximately definite idea of the extent of our contribution which could be relied upon for the immediate future. Bliss' answers must represent his own judgment as to how far the promises of the reports he had assembled in Washington could be fulfilled on the time schedules they had set.

"Like a young giant, conscious of his ultimate strength, we boasted unduly of what we could do within a time limit. And so, before the end of 1917, the European Allies, whose supreme hour was drawing near, began to have a reliance upon the strength of our military effort at an early date, upon a speedily organized and great army of aviation, that was not justified by the facts."¹

Through the summer and autumn we had kept on sending dribblets of troops to Pershing. We were far behind in the schedule of Pershing's plan. He had an hundred thousand men facing the bitter Lorraine winter, with less than a month's rations, and short of material for his service of supply across France. His prayer was for more men and supplies, more ships. His project for a million men in France by the summer of 1918 seemed hopeless of fulfillment.

"Already" [when Bliss left Washington] "there were some in America who began to despair of our getting an effective man-power into the field in time and who were beginning to say that, instead of using our food, clothing, money and raw material for an American army that would come into being too late, this money and material had better go to the maintenance of the Allied armies.

"It was at this time of uncertainty in the minds of those who knew and exaggerated hopes of those who did not know, on both sides of the Atlantic, that the American Mission was sent abroad. Other missions had come to tell us what we must and could do; this one went to Europe

¹ From notes in the Bliss papers.

to tell our associates in the war what we could do according to our optimistic schedules, within a fixed time limit.”¹

One of our projects had been the building of six million tons of new shipping, but production had not begun yet; others had been for guns and planes, which had been inevitably delayed beyond the time limit we had gallantly set, this partly from the failure of the Allies to send us models and blue-prints in time.

It was not worth while Bliss’ mentioning, just to show he was a prophet, that the War Department had stressed the fact upon our entry into the war that troops would be through their initial home training before guns and ships were ready. Now the million men which Pershing had asked for were in the training camps. The War Department had performed that part of the miracle we had envisioned in our war effort. And the Allies turned their eyes hungry for additional man-power toward these camps. Their own increased production of artillery could arm us until our guns were ready, as they were to be late in 1918 and in vast quantities for the campaign for 1919.

Returning to London, Bliss sent a cable on December 4 as the result of a meeting with Pershing, Robertson and Foch, stating an arrangement had been made about artillery and munitions, in order to facilitate the arrival of twenty-four American divisions in France not later than the end of June, 1918. It left “everything in the hands of the British and Americans who must furnish the tonnage. To secure results there must be continued insistence by our War Department.”

His experience on the Supreme War Council later led Bliss to say that if it had been functioning at the time his month’s labor would have been much easier and briefer.² Now he hurried home with his report. On December 18 he was back, his report on Baker’s desk.

The American mission by establishing various international committees had made a start toward economic and maritime coördination. Aside from our further naval aid and the proposed North Sea barrage to pen the U-boats in their lair, we were to reinforce the British High Seas Fleet with a division of battleships as a further guarantee against

¹ From notes in the Bliss papers.

² Bliss to the author.

any mischance should the German High Seas Fleet offer battle. But Britain, in doubt when our ship building program would balance the sinkings, was hesitant to place her ships at our disposal. The alarm of the Allied publics had been relieved to learn that the Italians were no longer in retreat. Foch had reported that their line would hold until spring. He said, "It is again glued together."¹

It was winter, and winter was not the time for fighting. The improved Italian situation gave a breathing spell. There had been a close call on the Piave, but the Allies had had other close calls. That prospective German drive on the western front was in the speculative future. The trench line from Flanders to Switzerland had been proof against all drives by either side—Champagne, Loos, the Somme, Verdun, Cambrai, Chemin des Dames, Passchendaele. It was accepted as a dependable, unbreakable institution in the World War, as Lee's army had been in the defense of Richmond in the first three years of the Civil War, and so it would sustain the next German onslaught, providing the United States time for preparation.

Yet, suppose that the trench wall which protected our drill-ground while we formed our large army to strike the "final, shattering blow" in 1919, should break in 1918! Then Pershing's little army in Lorraine would be the hostage of the disaster to the British and the French armies. That danger, which now seemed so distant, might become present in another three months. The fate of the war might depend upon whether a few American divisions arrived a week earlier or later in France.

Bliss was better able than any other man to have in mind the whole Allied military situation. He had seen the whole. He was free from the jealousies, the ambitions, which unconsciously influenced the Allied leaders. His was the detached view while theirs was the close view.

Space does not permit the printing in full of this or other reports, or many of Bliss' long letters which are so exhaustive and thorough, never sparing words in order that his chief should have every point before him in dealing with a crisis or forming a major policy. Yet the whole in each instance is tied together, and care has to be taken about paraphrases even at the risk of what may appear as tedious about a subject which is dim in the reader's memory. And the Bliss

¹ *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*. III, 268.

report of December 18, 1917, surely dealt with a crisis, and one of the great crises of world history.

"From our own point of view, it is the part of wisdom to get in without much delay or—stay out altogether. The latter is unthinkable; and so, if any one, influenced by consideration of minor difficulties, of minor deficiencies, of the unalterableness of previous programs of construction and equipment, and provision of transportation, says that to get in without much delay is impossible, the only reply is that we must do the impossible. . . .

"Before leaving Washington the suggestion has been rather strongly made that the movement of our troops to France be suspended and that the corresponding tonnage be utilized in carrying food and other supplies to nations in need of them. My original opinion as to the effect of this was confirmed by what I heard on all sides from military and civil officers. Of course I did not intimate that such a suggestion had been made. But no conversation on the subject of our participation in the war could go very far without bringing up the burning question of tonnage. Frequently in such conversations emphasis would be laid on the necessity for tonnage to transport food and other supplies. But whenever I asked what would be the effect if this necessity caused a cessation in our troop movements the invariable reply was that the moral effect, especially in France, would be disastrous.

"I showed him [General Sir William Robertson] the data as revised by the English shipping people, from which it appears that by the month of May next, including troops now in France, we could, with the facilities now at our disposal, transport not more than 525,000 men, including non-combatant forces; that without additional tonnage we could not supply even that number of men, much less accumulate the necessary reserve supplies of all kinds for a campaign. . . . He expressed grave apprehension at the statement."

Robertson did not quite agree with Foch about the Italian situation.

"He told me that he doubted whether Italy could be held in the war during the coming winter; and that should she remain in, it would require the presence of considerable troops from the English and French forces on the Western front to be maintained in Italy for the remainder of the war. . . .

"He said that we must not count on a campaign of 1919 and of reserving our efforts for that year; that the surest way to make it impossible was to count on it; that to ensure a campaign for 1919 every possible effort must be made early in 1918; that if it were good for America to wait it would be bad for Germany to let her wait; that events on the other

fronts were so shaping themselves as to make it quite sure that Germany would concentrate a powerful additional force somewhere on the Western front for a decisive blow; that the man-power of England and France together could probably not be increased and that they must rely on us for additional strength.

"Lloyd George said, 'It is better that I should put the facts very frankly to you, because there is the chance that you might think you can work up your army at leisure, and that it does not matter whether your troops are there in 1918 or 1919. But I want you to understand that it might make the most vital difference.'

"In the above will be seen lurking the startling idea that even with our added man-power Mr. Lloyd George, optimist though he be, feared the possibility of being able only to resist a German attack without inflicting on them a decisive defeat. Finally he said:

"To summarize what I have said as to the most important spheres in which the United States can help in the war. The first is that you should help France and her Alliance in the battle-line with as many men as you can possibly train and equip, at the earliest possible moment, *so as to be able to sustain the brunt of any German attack in the course of next year.*'

"It will be noted that Mr. Lloyd George referred to the necessity of our sending at the earliest possible date as many men as we could 'train and equip.' He did not know that the various ministers of munitions were then considering a plan by which we would be enabled, if we accepted their plan, to complete our equipment in artillery by using material to be furnished by England and France and without waiting for the production of the manufactured articles at home.

"So the problem of American military participation in the war began to shape itself as follows:

"*First:* Men, as many as possible and as soon as possible;

"*Second:* Provision of artillery equipment and ammunition for these men as they arrive in France;

"*Third:* Tonnage necessary to transport them.

"General Pétain said that the French losses have been approximately 2,600,000 men, killed, died of wounds, permanently incapacitated, and prisoners; and that he now had at his disposition 108 divisions, including *all* troops both those on the front and in reserve. These are in addition to the men of all classes in the service of the rear. Eight of these divisions, he said, will have been transferred to Italy by the beginning of the year, leaving 100 for service in France."

This made a total of 1,200,000 French, with the reduced size of their divisions, "and they have no more men that they can or are willing to call out."

The British, Bliss learned, had about the same number in France.

The German total already nearly equaled the British and French total; and it was considered that the Germans could transfer 1,339,000 men from the eastern front, exclusive of the 500,000 prisoners in Russia released by the treaty of peace between Germany and Russia.

"General Pétain stated that the United States must have a million men available for the early campaign of 1919, with another million ready to replace and reinforce them. . . . He explained that for the campaign of 1918 he would utilize the American troops in holding those parts of the line on which he would not make an offensive, thus relieving the French troops now there and making the latter available elsewhere.

"He further stated that the English are occupying a front of about 150 kilometers, while the French with less force are occupying about 500 kilometers. (It is to be noted the English front has been characterized by constant hard fighting while a considerable part of the French front has been quiescent since the early days of the war.)

"At the War Office in London I was informed that only with the greatest difficulty could they prevail on the French to let them have additional front; at this interview M. Clemenceau said (to use his own words), 'We have a devil of a time to get them to take more front.'

"One thing is certain, and it must not for a moment be lost from mind. If we are to take any part in the war, now, or at any time within reasonable future limits, the tonnage must be provided and provided now. Even if we are not to fight until 1919, it will require every available ton of shipping in operation from this moment in order to get a reasonable force of our troops, together with their supplies, in Europe by the end of the year 1918. If we wait until toward the end of that year before making an effort to get the tonnage our troops will not be available for a campaign until the year 1920.

"It is inconceivable that we can wait so long. . . . Every day of delay, so long as the submarines continue in action as now, reduces the amount of shipping available. We ought to be able to determine very promptly the last ton of shipping that can be made available from vessels controlled by the United States. The difference must be made up by our Allies. But, whether we are to make a strong effort in 1918 or a still stronger one in 1919, the shipping must be made available now."

In summing up in the note of December 18 he said that the crisis was not only owing to the collapse of Russia as a military factor, but "it is also largely due to lack of military coördination, lack of unity of control on the part of the Allied forces in the field."

"The lack of unity of control results from military jealousies and suspicion as to ultimate national aims."

"Our Allies urge us to profit by their experience in three and a half years of war; to adopt the organization, the types of artillery, tanks, etc., that the test of war has proved to be satisfactory. We should go further. In making the great military effort now demanded of us we should demand as a prior condition that our Allies also profit by the experience of three and a half years of war in the matter of absolute unity of military control. National jealousies and suspicions and susceptibilities of national temperament must be put aside in favor of this unified control, even going if necessary (as I believe it is) to the limit of unified command. Otherwise, our dead and theirs may have died in vain.

"The securing of this unified control, even unified command in the last resort, is within the power of the President if it is in anyone's power. The military men of the Allies admit its necessity and are ready for it. They object to Mr. Lloyd George's plan of Rapallo (which, however, I would accept if nothing better can be done) for the reason that, on last analysis, it gives political and not military control. I asked Sir Douglas Haig and General Robertson what would happen if the military advisers of the Supreme War Council recommended and the prime ministers accepted a military plan which the British commander-in-chief in the field and the Chief of Staff did not approve. They said that it would be impossible to carry it into execution without their approval; that they would have to be relieved and the advisers of the Supreme War Council put in control. In the present temper of the English people such an issue could not be forced without the probable defeat of the government. In general, they held that the problem now is a military one and that in some way unity of control must be obtained through an unhampered military council."

Bliss' first idea was that the commanders-in-chief of the armies should compose the Supreme War Council. This would have reduced his own importance, or perhaps eliminated him, but that was immaterial. Later he changed his mind about this, and found political control the most practicable, in view of national and human equations. He continued in his report:

"The difficulty will come with the political men. They have a feeling that military men, uncontrolled, may direct military movements counter to ultimate political interests. They do not fully realize that *now* the only problem is to beat the Central Powers. They are thinking too much of what they want to do after the Central Powers are beaten. They do not realize, as the Central Powers do, that national troops as a body can only be efficiently employed in the direction in which national interests lie,—with, in this war, the sole exception of our troops which will fight best where they get the best military results. There need be no

political fear that great bodies of English or French troops will be 'switched off' to help the territorial aspirations of the Italians, nor *vice versa*. It is not merely a political necessity, it is also a military one which any commander-in-chief must recognize, that the English army must fight with its back to the Channel, the French army must fight with its back to Paris, the Italian army must continue to fight Austria in the only direction by which it can reach her. This does not prevent troops of any of the four—English, French, Americans, Italians—being detached in accord with some coördinated plan from their main army where they are less needed to operate on another part of the front where they are more needed. The English failure to accomplish results at Cambrai in the last days of November was likely due to lack of reserves which might have been thus furnished."

The extent to which the statesmen could yield must be dependent upon retention of powers with their people. "Probably no English or French premier could, of his own motion, propose what would look to the man in the street (the men who overturn governments) like a deliberate surrender of control. . . .

"Finally, consideration should be given to the question of changing our military line of action so as to bring us into closer touch with the British. This is a very delicate matter and if taken up must be handled with great care. But it is also a very serious matter.

"We must take note of the deep, growing and already very strong conviction on the part of Englishmen, both military and the civil, that the war must finally be fought out by an Anglo-Saxon combination. If this is true, it may become evident by the driving in of a wedge into the French line that will cause that people to quit, not to make a separate peace, but to be reduced to a state of inaction leaving the others to fight it out.

"But the driving in of that wedge, as our troops are now and apparently are to be situated, will separate us still further from the English forces. If it is likely that we may have to fight with them every purely military consideration points to our joining them now. It would cause a contraction of the French line which would greatly add to its strength. If the French could be brought to look upon this Anglo-Saxon union as having no ulterior object other than a more certain defeat of the enemy, it would be greatly to be desired. The situation as it is, is fraught with possible great danger.

"So earnest are General Robertson and Sir Douglas Haig in this matter that in my interviews with them they have urged our amalgamating bodies of our troops with theirs. Sir Douglas Haig even said that he would give command of these mixed organizations to American officers

and that as rapidly as our units become sufficient in number to form complete American divisions they would be separated for this purpose."

It is well to mention here that the Haig proposal was the one eventually accepted when the anticipated crisis had become actual. The common language made training easier with the British than the French. But Pershing's sector, from which he planned to make his offensive in 1919, and actually did make it in 1918, was on the French right, far from the British line, and his service of supply plant across France was being built to serve his army in Lorraine.

Pétain's plan to allow Pershing to keep his divisions intact, and then to introduce them into quiet trenches to relieve the French divisions for the offensive, would give Pershing the time he wanted for trench training. Moreover, experience had already proven that it was fatal for military efficiency to mix our small units with the French, and this had not yet been proven with the British. The French were making their best bid against British competition for our reinforcement of their lines and nationalistic aims; for the British had shipping and the French had not.

Since the British command had given the Canadians and Australians independent corps, which were very distinct entities, it could hardly refuse to keep faith by turning the divisions back to Pershing when any defensive crisis was over.

"It is the only way that I know of"—closer coöperation with the British—"to secure real unity of control of shipping, to prevent wasteful use of tonnage and to utilize it all to the best common advantage, and which may prove to be necessary in order to ensure victory."

Bliss was convinced the British could spare the shipping. He had in mind how Orlando, the Italian premier who sat on the Supreme War Council, revealed the amount of British shipping being employed for the transport of troops to Italy, which might have been sent by rail, and that six Italian liners were lying idle in the harbor of Genoa. Sir Joseph Maclay, the new British director of shipping, had said no ships could be spared, and Lloyd George had said that Sir Eric Geddes might work out a plan to provide some tonnage for us, but that would take two months.¹ As Bliss saw it, two months'

¹ The Second Session of the Supreme War Council, December 1, 1917.

delay, a month's delay, might be fatal.

On December 23 Bliss returned to the charge in a memorandum in order to strengthen the hands of Secretary Baker and the President:

"The tonnage can be secured or it cannot be secured. We should ascertain which is the fact without delay. We cannot afford to play any part in the game of mutual deception which has been played so long among the Allies as to their relative national power as represented by the military force which they can put and maintain in the field. We have every evidence of their reliance upon us for a great effort by our man-power. In the war now being waged we cannot exert our man-power on this side of the Atlantic. If we cannot do what our Allies want us to do, we should tell them so frankly and let them make their plans accordingly. I doubt if it is an exaggeration to say that our Allies are now held in the war by their hope in us. If we cannot realize this hope we will be responsible for continued enormous destruction of wealth and of life and, to crown all, will have maintained an idle army at home at a cost of billions of dollars for mere maintenance. . . .

"Is it not our bounden duty to ourselves and our Allies to immediately ascertain what we can do and then be guided accordingly? The question will be asked, How can we ascertain this? I think that the answer is a simple one. . . .

"If we assume that we are to make our first effort in the campaign of 1919, it will require to be made available *now* a certain amount of tonnage; if we are to play a part in the campaign of 1918, it will require a certain greater amount of tonnage. In either case, I believe it is impossible for the United States to provide the necessary amount of tonnage out of the total which it controls. That which we cannot supply must be supplied by our Allies, else we can do nothing. It is therefore necessary to determine what we can supply ourselves, which in turn will determine what our Allies must supply. . . .

"In determining this, we must at once determine whether we are to attempt to play an effective part in the campaign of 1918 or defer our efforts until the beginning of the campaign of 1919. *In either case, we must have our Army in Europe in 1918.* In the former case, we will require a lesser amount of tonnage operating over a longer time; in the latter case, we will require a greater amount of tonnage, but will also be able to sooner return part of this tonnage to the general trade of the world. . . .

"Personally, I have only one opinion as to what is the wise thing for us to do, if we should be able to do it. I think that we should make our effort on the assumption that in the latter half of the year 1918 we may be required to put our troops into action on a large scale. If, during that year, no military crisis occurs, so much the better. In any event, we will

have our troops where they must be in 1918 in order that we may play our part in 1919. . . ."

Bliss never hesitated about repetition to press a conviction home. Driving this one home was perhaps his supreme service as a military counsellor. Otherwise, we might not have had troops in France for Château-Thierry, St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne. Further quotation is historically warranted from one of the most important documents in relation to the United States' part in the war.

"This will bring us to what seems to me to be the crux of the entire question. The English, interested in the maintenance of certain trade with their own ships and which will have to be temporarily given up in order to assist us in our military requirements, will undoubtedly say that we could, if we would, take ships of our own from certain lines of trade and employ them for our military uses. We will deny that this can be done. Who can settle this question, and in what way?

"It seems to me that there is one, and only one, way in which it can be done; and that is, to throw all of the Allied shipping into a common pool and regard all of it as an agency to be used in common for the prosecution of the war, whether in carrying American or British or French or Italian troops and supplies, or in carrying munitions and raw material for munitions from any Ally to another, or in carrying food and other supplies from one Ally to another or to the neutrals. This can only be done by an Allied Commission having full power to act and, as practically all available shipping is controlled by Great Britain and the United States, the Commission should practically be an Anglo-American Commission. This Commission should be composed not only of the ablest men obtainable but who are also imbued with the idea that the shipping of the world is the one all-important agency for the successful prosecution of the war and that if not properly directed to this end the war may be lost. . . .

"National jealousies, which have prolonged the war beyond reason, must be sunk out of sight. The determination of one or another Ally to retain a certain line of trade must be yielded if necessary for the proper utilization of the common tonnage, and the restoration of former trade relations must be left for adjustment after a successful determination of the war. This, of course, is the most difficult matter.

"The Inter-Allied Conference recommended the organization of the Commission which I have referred to above. I have been told that, subsequent to the Conference, certain interests in London developed an opposition to the organization of this Commission for the reason that English shipping interests do not desire the interference with them that would necessarily result from the operation of such a Commission.

four to six or eight mules in single file. Each mule has a lot of bells that make a never ceasing jingling. But at the head of the file of mules is always hitched a tiny little donkey, and he looks especially small because the mules are very large. He has more good sense than a mule and so they use him for a leader. And he tugs away as though he thought he were pulling the whole load. Then there are a great many of them that carry loads on their backs, all sorts of market produce, great jars of wine, pots of flowers &c. If the load is not too big there is generally a woman sitting on him and she looks very funny too, for she generally sits very close to his tail so that if she were to give a jump I think she would find herself sitting on the ground. The other day I saw two women on one donkey, one with her face towards his head, the other, towards his tail. Both were knitting

"England has set apart some two million tons of shipping to meet the demands of France for food and supplies of all kinds. I understand that, to meet the increased demands of France, a certain amount of tonnage has been set apart for her use by the United States and that England proposes to withdraw from that use an equivalent tonnage of her own that has hitherto been devoted to it. I have heard it said that certain American tonnage was made available for the Italians and that England thereupon withdrew corresponding tonnage of her own. If this thing be true, the United States has diverted tonnage needed for her own military use without, in reality, giving any added tonnage for the use of these Allies. . . .

"Of course, I am not an expert in this matter. I do not know all the fine points,—political, commercial, economic,—that may be urged for or against the above method of handling the tonnage difficulty. But there are experts who know these points and there are others above these experts who can weigh their views and who must make a decision. . . .

"It seems to me to be the solemn duty of the United States to determine for itself which, of the various solutions proposed for the few important problems, are the wise ones and then exert its powerful influence in bringing about their acceptance. If this Government believes that the Tonnage Commission recommended by the Inter-Allied Conference is the best solution, it should announce its adhesion and designate its own members; because, without such action neither this solution nor the solution of any other difficulty is likely to be accepted. If it thinks this solution is not the proper one it must be because it thinks some other is wiser. If it urges that one it will probably be accepted.

"Is it the most reasonable method for each Ally to determine for and by itself what part of its available tonnage it shall allocate to the use of any other Ally or neutral? For example, England allots a certain amount of her tonnage for the general uses of one of the Allies. This amount of tonnage is, almost certainly, not all which that Ally wants. It may not be enough to prevent hardship. She wants all that she can get, and having gotten all that she can she still wants more. Naturally, she is thinking of her own interests without special regard to those of the other Allies and without much disposition to make any concession to them which she is not obliged to make. If she thinks that there is still some available tonnage controlled by the United States she will ask for it. It may be, as I have said, that she is suffering some actual hardship; but, all the world is suffering some hardship and will probably have to suffer more. . . .

"This central body would scrutinize the movements of every ship. It is commonly believed that a great amount of tonnage is wasted in long hauls for which short hauls could be substituted, for example, coal should not be allowed to be carried from the United States to Italy in a big trans-Atlantic steamer when a smaller steamer, making more frequent trips, can haul the same or a greater amount of coal from England. The

time is at hand when the daily ration of all human beings within the limits of the Alliance must be fixed, although it may be fixed at different rates in the different countries. This central body, on which food experts and other experts will sit, can determine the allocation of tonnage to haul these supplies with the minimum wastage of tonnage. . . .

"The United States is now in a position to take the lead in bringing about absolute unity of control in this matter and probably in the others which are vital to our success in the prosecution of the war. Unless the Government of the United States takes such action I doubt whether the unity of control over any of these things will be secured."

The War Department and the nation now made shipping the most urgent business of the hour. If the Allies would not supply us with transport, except at the cost of the independence of our army, we would manage it for ourselves.

With Liberty Loan and all other drives over the shoulder, the democracy turned to the drive to "Build a Bridge to France." We were scouring the seas for ships, curtailing luxuries to make cargo space for necessities, cutting Great Lakes ships in two to get them through the Welland Canal and rejoining the parts after the passage, tightening our belts on rations in fashion with the other Allies as we ate war bread, sending non-ocean vessels to join our cross-Channel fleet between France and England—material for ship building and for transport across France had priority—as we determined to be on time to save the war in 1918 for the final campaign of 1919 to win the cause and end the ordeal to which we were irrevocably committed. The draft would provide the flow of recruits to take the place of the trained men as fast as they departed over there from the camps.

The champion of unity, having made his recommendations and given his counsel, would return to France to act as the legate of unity on the Supreme War Council in ending this "particular episode" of human history, as he called it when philosophy turned cold analysis on the lessons of history. Until this curtain fell he would not drop into Baker's office again for a relaxing period of general ideas after the day's specific problems.

"I remember the shock when I asked General Bliss, in weariness of spirit, how long this war was likely to last. He thought about it for a moment and said, 'Thirty years.'

"I said, 'But, General, it isn't possible for what is now going on in Europe to last thirty years.'

"'Oh no, of course not. This particular episode will be concluded in a year or two, then the war will take on a new phase and will be waged for a little while, perhaps with economic weapons, until nations rehabilitate themselves and feel a fresh access of strength for another try on the military side. Unless all the lessons of history are deceptive, thirty years would be about the normal time for a generation that had the passion to breed this war to pass off the stage and let others come who have a new objective and a new point of view.'"¹

In his old age after his retirement he was to have his tilt against the windmills to break the historical precedent in a new order of thinking for world unity of peace; but now his business was to pack his bags and gather his staff for the very indefinite stay at Versailles. His was a small army, indeed, for a four-star general; eleven commissioned officers, a state department disburser, stenographers, translators, field clerks, and telephone operators. Again he would be in the rôle of a desk soldier in name, although even division commanders in the World War were rarely under fire; theirs, too, was largely a thinking part.

Devotion to Bliss and the fact they would be in France, and there might be later transferred to the line, which is every soldier's ambition, were the only reward for Brigadier General P. D. Lochridge, executive officer; Colonel B. H. Wells and Major W. B. Wallace, Committee on Allies and Neutrals; Lieutenant Colonel W. S. Browning and Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Poillon, Committee on Enemies and Neutrals; Colonel S. D. Embick and Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Coward, Committee on Material and Man Power; Secretary, Colonel U. S. Grant 3rd and Assistant Secretary Second Lieutenant P. A. Bedard, Supply Officer; Major C. M. Exley, H. R. Young for the State Department; and Captain B. A. Fuller, Military Information and Translations. Poillon had been Bliss' aide in the Moro Province.

Before his departure Bliss said to Baker:

"Now that I shall not return here you will want to make my successor, who has been the Acting Chief in name as well as fact."

Bliss' retirement date had passed. He had turned the corner of sixty-four December 31, 1917. Once he ceased to be Chief, he would

¹ Address of Newton D. Baker on the presentation of a memorial portrait of Bliss to the Council House of the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, January 18, 1933.

automatically lose two stars and be a major general again.

"I shall not make a new Chief until I know my man," Baker replied.

So Bliss remained Chief of Staff until General Peyton C. March succeeded him. Then an act of Congress gave our Military Representative on the Supreme War Council the rank of General.

XXI

WITH THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL

THE first of "four hasty scrawls to you and Eleanor" he began on the Washington-New York sleeper the morning of January 10 before sailing on the *Olympic*, which carried six thousand soldiers to France.

"We passed the sentinels and civil guards and the secret service men and finally got on the pier. Motors were dashing up from various directions and discharging parties of officers. Long lines of troops were marching on board. . . .

"When we left the pier it was already growing dark and the huge buildings of the city loomed up with an appearance of almost grotesque mystery through the grey mist of the approaching winter night. Before we reached the battery the great office buildings had lost their distinctive forms and looked like dark tapestries dropped from the upper air and studded with countless scintillating stars. I think that it is a wonderful sight at any hour of the day or time of year; but to look back from far down the bay, through the frozen grey mist of a cold winter's night, when all details are lost, when one sees only a dark mass vaguely outlined against a sky only a little less dark, a congerie of turrets and battlements and spires of an unearthly city with a fairy gauzelike curtain of twinkling lights dropped in front of it—it is a sight to haunt the memory."

Abandon-ship drill for the six thousand soldiers on board, most of whom had never been at sea before, became a test of the requisite speed and discipline should the ship be torpedoed.

"The second day the word was passed that the alarm would be sounded within certain time limits but the exact moment was not given. Thereafter no warning at all was given. Yesterday the last man was out in a little over three minutes which is as good time as can be made. . . . On this ship the greatest stress is laid on keeping the lower ports closed and—of course—the watertight doors. Captain Hays insists that had not the lower ports of the *Lusitania* been open that vessel would be afloat today."

He arrived in London January 19, bearing the latest word about our home situation, to learn the latest about the situation in Europe. In the month since he had left England the shadow of the German threat on the western front had become a growing cloud as Hindenburg and Ludendorff formed their battalions. The conference with General Sir William Robertson and Lord Derby, the war minister, "was all on the one subject of sending over at once three battalions of American infantry to be incorporated in each of 50 divisions, making a total of about 150,000 men."

"They stated that they agreed to the conditions laid down by General Pershing and which he has doubtless communicated to you. They all seemed to be badly rattled. They showed me their information indicating that the Germans have already secured a decided superiority in men and guns on the Western front. They anticipate a tremendous effort by the Germans early in the year. . . .¹

"I talked with Lord Reading till 11.30 P. M. and when I left, he said he was going to repeat my views to the Prime Minister. The next morning the Prime Minister asked me to see him at 10 Downing Street at 11.45. I found him alone sitting at the great council table where the action was taken which caused our war of the Revolution and where the document was signed which recognized our independence. After a while Mr. Bonar Law came in and then Lord Milner and then Lord Derby and then Mr. Balfour and then I saw that the Cabinet was assembling.²

"Mr. Lloyd George went over the situation in about the same way that Lord Reading had done the night before and repeated the same arguments in favor of our sending over 150,000 men at once to go on the British line. . . . He said that he would talk more fully on the subject that evening at dinner at Mr. Bonar Law's house . . . together with our Mr. Crosby and Mr. Cravath. We talked until a late hour over the general situation. It all came to the same thing. They want men and they want them quickly. The proposition is, in a general way, for them to take our men with simply their rifles and the ammunition therefor and their clothing—the British to transport them and supply them in every way.

"On meeting General Robertson that afternoon I told him that my instructions were to the effect that the proposition to bring over the 150 American battalions was not to interfere with carrying out our own program which required additional assistance from Great Britain in the

¹ Letter to Baker, January 22, 1918.

² Letter to Mrs. Bliss, January 18, 1918.

way of shipping. . . . Sir Joseph ¹ stated that it was an absolute impossibility and that, on the other hand, Great Britain expected assistance in shipping from the United States. He called in his principal experts and they confirmed his declaration. I asked Sir Joseph whether, if our government made the sending of the 150 battalions contingent on our getting additional assistance in tonnage, we could hope to get it. He said most positively 'No.' He adhered to this statement although General Robertson, who was present, stated that the failure to receive the 150 battalions would invite disaster on the British front." ²

When she was free from other errands the *Olympic* might bring over American troops, but Sir Joseph would have no false hopes roused by that particular instance of generosity as his ears rang with British calls for ships he could not supply. Presumably his expectations from us were based on our ship-building program, which had been a little overtimed as to rapidity of fulfillment, if not its magnitude. Sir William Robertson, the British chief of staff, had risen from the ranks in the hard school of the long training of British regulars. Even the alacrity with which the Canadians and Australians had become veteran on the Western front could not convince Sir William that war-time concentration and long days of application by citizen soldiers of a land of high mass intelligence might shorten the requisite period of preparation.

The question which the British posed for themselves at the end of January, 1918, was whether in that critical time they should spare the ships and the energy to bring over and train American troops unless they could be made effective by mixing with their own promptly enough to aid in stopping the most powerful offensive in history. From their own experts in America British leaders had information to compare with Bliss' about the progress of the men in our camps. They had discouraging reports even from Americans. Major General Leonard Wood had been sent abroad with other division commanders on a tour of observation which would enable them the better to prepare their divisions for their coming service in France.

"I want to tell you something of which General Barry can speak more in detail if you should desire to have him do so. From the moment of

¹ Sir Joseph Maclay, Controller of British Shipping.

² Letter to Baker, January 22, 1918.

my arrival I have heard repeated to me from all sides many reckless remarks made by General Wood in regard to our military situation. The sum and substance of it seems to be that he has done his best to discredit the United States here in Europe. He has told of everything that has not been done and nothing as to the things which have been done. Men like Mr. Crosby and Mr. Cravath have expressed themselves to me very forcibly as to the impropriety of his conduct. General Barry tells me that it has been the same during his trip in France. I think that I can already see the evil effect produced on the minds of British officials here. It is going to make it much more difficult for us to negotiate about getting aid in shipping if people here believe that whatever sacrifices they make to give us additional tonnage is only for the purpose of bringing over an unorganized and undisciplined mob. From what I am told as to his sayings in France, I should think that it would add very much to the difficulties of General Pershing's position. . . .

"He knows that the British and French want us to do certain things which I am afraid the American people will be very loath to approve. He can tell their commanders and the heads of their governments what he would do were he in control, leaving them with the conviction that he would do exactly what they wish. I should not be surprised if you were to find a quiet movement initiated through diplomatic channels to substitute him for General Pershing. I learned yesterday that Mr. Lloyd George had inquired at our Embassy whether General Wood had returned from France, and had expressed an earnest desire to see him as soon as he arrived.

"I am not writing more fully on the above subject, first, on account of haste, and secondly, because I understand that our Ambassador here has already made a report which probably has reached you by this time. . . .

"I learned from Mr. Lloyd George that the military part of the Supreme War Council is waiting for me in order to formally decide upon their recommendations as to the general military operations to be carried out by the Allies in the near future. Mr. Lloyd George wants to have a meeting of the Prime Ministers at Versailles early next week, at which will be discussed these recommendations. I have therefore decided to go over tomorrow."¹

Then, when he was established at Versailles:

"I am writing this in the Hotel de Trianon, the park of the Château beginning just under my window. The Hotel was commandeered as an office building for the Supreme War Council. General Cadorna and the Italian section has one-half of this floor; I have the other half for the American section. This is the 2nd floor and just under my office (where

¹ To Baker, January 22, 1918.

I am writing) is the office of Sir Henry Wilson who has the British section, while the other half of his floor is occupied by the French section under General Weygand, the French Assistant Chief of Staff.”¹

In 1915 Lord Kitchener had suggested the need of such a body as the Supreme War Council,² which was in no wise acceptable to the premiers reflecting the views of the generals and the people at a time when Kitchener had to yield to political persuasion not to make public his gloomy view that the war would last three years. Until the Italian disaster, Allied coördination of policy had been much the same as though in place of a clearing house each bank in a city should send out messengers with checks to each bank on which they were drawn. There were intermittent conferences between premiers and generals, suggestions were made by mail or messenger, which were passed on through the ambassadors from one government to another, or from chiefs of staff to commanders-in-chief, and then back again, with the danger that before agreement was reached the battle would be lost. Now Bliss, Wilson, Cadorna and Weygand were under the same roof and had only to step across the hall or downstairs to exchange information and discuss projects, and each had a staff of experts at his call. They represented the four great nations on the Allied side. According to the view of the British, who took the lead in creating the Council:

“The only other great power technically at war with Germany and her Allies was Russia. There the unrecognized Communist government was in power with the avowed object of making peace at the earliest date, and it was therefore obviously impossible that overtures could be made to them to participate.

“The smaller nations were ignored as far as permanent representation was concerned though provision was made for the attendance of their representatives when occasion demanded. . . The Supreme War Council was in the first place a political and not a military body . . . to be an instrument for arriving at a common policy in the conduct of the war. It was not to be an instrument for carrying out that policy.”³

The Council was composed of the three premiers, who were to meet regularly once a month, or on special call, accompanied by an-

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, January 29, 1918.

² Historical Record of the Supreme War Council by the British section, 1918.

³ Ibid.

other Cabinet minister. President Wilson would have made a fourth member, accompanied by the American Secretary of War, if time and distance permitted them to be present. In the December session House acted for Wilson. Pershing and Bliss hoped that he would remain, but the President wanted him nearer Washington than Versailles. For a time Arthur Hugh Frazier, the experienced counsellor of the American Embassy in Paris, took his place, and then Bliss became the representative of the State Department and the President on the Council as well as the Military Representative. To explain the functions of the Council in his own words:

"The Permanent Military Representatives are the technical advisers of the Supreme War Council. When the latter meets, it considers the joint notes prepared by these military advisers. It accepts these notes or modifies them, or rejects them—in short, does what it pleases with them. The Permanent Military Advisers are in constant session, whether the Supreme War Council is in adjournment or not, and in their own meetings they vote on the joint notes which they propose to present to the Supreme War Council, but after presentation of these notes the military advisers have no further vote.

"They are present at the sessions of the Supreme War Council (that is to say, of the three prime ministers), together with anyone else whom the Supreme War Council chooses to be present. All the military men thus present may, with the permission of the Supreme War Council, take part in the discussion of the notes, but they have nothing to say as to final acceptance, rejection or modification.

"It is in that way that Generals Haig, Robertson, Pershing, Foch, and other military advisers are present, besides the Permanent Military Advisers. You can see, however, that when they take final action it is only after they have listened to the expression of every shade of military opinion. In short the Supreme War Council, as now constituted, is a bench of judges consisting of the political heads of three of the Allied governments, before whom the military men urge the 'pros' and 'cons' of each case which is submitted to the decision of these three judges."¹

After reading this no one in the State Department who has asked "Just what is the Supreme War Council?" ought to remain in ignorance, leaving the inquirer with no further concern than to watch results. Not only were commanders-in-chief of the other Allied armies apprehensive lest their powers be curtailed by the Supreme War Council, but there had been a flutter in Pershing's staff as to

¹ Letter to Frank L. Polk, Counsellor of the State Department, February 19, 1918.

just what use scholar Bliss might make of his direct relation with a scholarly Secretary of War and a scholarly President. The presence of another four-star general in France, who would also be in touch with the Allied leaders, especially if ambition lighted his eye in his secret thoughts as he looked toward army headquarters, might lead to complications. There was the example of the frustration of Grant by Halleck and of Lee by Jefferson Davis, which Baker had in mind when he gave Pershing a free hand, while Bliss could call up scores of similar examples from history.

Allied leaders might seek to gain a point over Pershing by appealing to Washington through Bliss. The higher a man's position the greater his power, the brighter the light he casts for reflected glory. Gossips who never think of themselves as intriguers might bear tales about Bliss' actions to Pershing and catch him when his countless other irritations left him in a receptive mood. Then he might unbosom himself to a friend. Charles M. Dawes wrote in his diary:

"We live in the midst of events. 'The English, notwithstanding their steadfast refusal to mix small units of their own troops with others—even their colonial troops with their own—and the French, are endeavoring to persuade the United States to scatter their troops in small units throughout the French and British line. General Bliss had acceded to the idea. General Pershing is obdurate in his position against it. Bliss has not yet gone to the extent, as I understand, of making to Wilson a recommendation contrary to Pershing. John is therefore in one of those crises at the beginning of military movements alike so annoying and yet so valuable as establishing unquestioned leadership. The President of France, the British authorities, Lloyd George, General Bliss—all arrayed against John—mean nothing to him except they present reason. John Pershing, like Abraham Lincoln, 'recognizes no superior on the face of the earth.'"¹

When Bliss' mission was Allied unity any rift between him and Pershing would have been a bad example. Evidently the Dawes entry related to reports of Bliss' attitude while in London when Robertson told Bliss that Pershing had accepted the terms of the British proposal for amalgamation of our small units with the British. But it appeared that Robertson had been in error, and Bliss deceived, as he learned from Pershing at Versailles.

¹ *A Journal of the Great War*, Dawes. I, 71.

"We met that morning in General Wilson's office in the Trianon," Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, January 29th, the day after the entry in the Dawes' journal, "there being present, Mr. Lloyd George, General Wilson, Lord Milner, Sir Douglas Haig, General Robertson, Lt. Col. Hankey, Secretary of the British War Cabinet, Pershing and myself."

When Lloyd George turned to Bliss, hoping his views would be more liberal than Pershing's, Bliss replied, according to Pershing, "General Pershing will speak for us, and whatever he says with regard to the disposition of the American forces will have my approval."¹ This served notice in high quarters of the Bliss attitude. Pershing elsewhere refers, without specifying details, to a previous discussion between the two in which Bliss proposed that they submit their difference to the Secretary of War.

"So I said, 'Bliss, do you know what would happen if we should do that. We should be relieved from further duty in France, and that is just what we should deserve.' We spent some time examining the question from all angles, until he finally came around to my view, and said, 'I think you are right and I shall back you up in the position you have taken.'"²

There is no reference to this in Bliss' letters and papers of the time except his remark in his letter to Mrs. Bliss that "our plan" which Pershing refers to as a compromise was accepted, but the minutes of the Council reveal his attitude in harmony with Pershing's in the great essential principle. Later he wrote:

"About Dawes' book and his unwarranted assertions about splitting up American forces in France, I am waiting with some curiosity to see whether an interviewer asks Pershing about it and what he will say. I have letters from him, written after the campaign, thanking me for the cordial and unvarying support he received during the whole time we were together.

"The question of the method of using the American troops came up only twice. The first time was at the meeting of the S. W. C. on January 30, 1918. At the meeting on the day before, Marshal Haig maintained that the American forces, good as they were, were not better than the British; that British divisions required nine months' home training and six months' training in France before they could be put on the line for

¹ *My Experiences in the World War*, Pershing, I, 308.

² *Ibid.*, 305.

real fighting; that the Americans could not do better; that he 'consequently did not consider the Allies could accept the American forces, as a force, to be of effective support this year.' General Pétain said that he 'agreed entirely with the conclusions arrived at by Sir Douglas Haig.' In his opinion, the only use that could be made of American troops during the approaching crisis was by putting them into the lines by battalions and regiments along with the British and French. He said that if this were not done, the situation as forecast by Sir Douglas Haig would certainly be realized, 'and the war would enter into a very critical period.' In the course of the discussion Baron Sonnino, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, asked a very pointed question as to whether the Americans would consent to this use of their troops. Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Clemenceau knew that this was a very disagreeable question to be pressed on the Americans. They accordingly immediately diverted the discussion in another direction.

"At the meeting on the following day (Jan. 31st), Baron Sonnino again pressed the question in such a way that it could not be avoided. Lloyd George and Clemenceau, seated directly opposite me at the table, both looked at me in a way to indicate that they thought I should make some answer. My statement, considerably condensed, was contained in the 'Annex' to the procès-verbal of January 31st. The statement as given in the 'Annex' does not, I think, make quite clear the point that I impressed on the S. W. C. I said:

"'You believe that a great emergency is approaching; that the emergency may result in irretrievable disaster if such American troops as may be in the rear of the British and French lines are not available for the same use that, in such an emergency, you would make of your own troops in a similar stage of training. Baron Sonnino insists on an answer to his question as to whether the American Government will give in advance its approval of the use of our troops as recommended by Sir Douglas Haig and General Pétain. But, in doing this, Baron Sonnino endangers the very result that he wants to attain. If, before the emergency actually occurs, he insists on an answer from the American Government it will probably be a blunt 'No'; because on general principles, that use of American troops is repugnant to American sentiment. But (I said) suppose he does not insist on an answer to his question,—what will be the situation? There are certain American organizations behind both of your lines, undergoing training, just as similar organizations of your troops are behind your lines undergoing training. You are not going to put those troops of yours into the line unless you have to. You will do so only if it is necessary to prevent a great disaster. When you are ordering those troops of yours into the line to prevent disaster, do you suppose that similar American troops will sit by the roadside smoking their pipes and doing nothing? In my opinion those American troops in such a case would go in without orders; but I have

no doubt that in such a case their use would be authorized from American headquarters.'

"But I made it as clear as possible that the permanent use of American troops, as contemplated by Haig and Pétain, would not be permitted. So far as the statements of Dawes are concerned, the essence of my view is contained in the last two sentences of the 'Annex' which I attach hereto."

This Annex concluded with the words, "Such a thing as permanent amalgamation of our units with British and French units would be intolerable to American sentiment."

"After I made my statement Mr. Clemenceau, the presiding officer, remarked 'That point is now settled.' It would not have come up again had it not been for the disaster of March 21st.

"On March 27th, the draft of a Joint Note, prepared by General Rawlinson, the then British Military Representative, came up for consideration at Versailles. This was the one which contemplated the bringing over of American infantry and machine gun units (during the existing emergency), leaving the artillery to follow as rapidly as practicable. I had insisted that the Note should not be considered unless General Pershing had an opportunity to be present and set forth his views. After he left the Council room I took Lord Rawlinson's draft and modified it so as to conform in general to the views expressed by General Pershing, as I then understood those views and understand them now." [The minutes show that, Pershing left the meeting not caring to go on with the discussion, and that after he had gone, Bliss said to proceed with it.] "My recollection is that, instead of following the usual course of telegraphing this draft direct to Washington, I took it in to Paris and presented it to you and General Pershing at his house on the Rue de Varennes; and that after you and he discussed it you then drew up a telegram to the President with your recommendations.

"I have not the record before me as I write but, whatever it is, I am content to stand by it."¹

Bliss recognized that his rôle was to relieve Pershing of unnecessary burdens; to act as interference against tackles while Pershing carried the ball. It was for Pershing to utilize Bliss' broad experience and his continuous contact with all the Allies as a medium to hasten victory through unity of action.

Bliss treasured the numerous proofs he had of Pershing's praise

¹ Letter from Bliss to Baker, August 29, 1931.

of his work. There could be no real difference between the two when they talked the subject out together, and Bliss understood Pershing's purpose. Bliss, from his daily touch with the fluctuation of Allied views and the situation of the Allies, large and small, could better realize the gravity of the German threat on the Western front in the spring of 1917 than Pershing in his isolated ordeal of training and forming his organization at the front and along his long line of communications to the French ports. Bliss could better appreciate how all the bricks had been near tumbling after the Italian disaster and how they might all tumble from Serbia to China in case of a similar disaster on the western front and on top of our little nest-egg of an army. Although our troops were mixed with the British to avert the disaster, once the danger was over, we should be in the master position as the final reinforcement to secure the recovery of the independence of our army.

There would have been no waste of words, time and loss of tempers on this score if the Allies could have joined us in carrying out Bliss' original suggestion on May 4, 1917. With the aid of Allied shipping Pershing might have had already an independent army of six or eight of our large divisions instead of two in France ready for major combat action.

The agreement of January 29 provided that 150 battalions should be trained with the British, then to be formed into divisions with their own artillery after their staffs had been trained in *liaison* with the British staffs. It was much the same as the original proposal by Haig on Bliss' first trip abroad. Delay had been largely owing to the attitude of Robertson which, in general, so tried the patience of Lloyd George that he was soon relieved in favor of Sir Henry Wilson as British chief of staff. Although Lloyd George agreed to supply the ships, what could a Prime Minister do if Sir Joseph Maclay, the British shipping controller, said he had no ships, or none he could spare and not endanger British security.

"The time has come to strain every nerve to accomplish it," Bliss wrote, "to squeeze out the additional troop transport tonnage, and to assure at any cost an adequate supply of clothing and other Quartermaster material. General Atterbury is convinced that we can handle here in France the arrival of at least two divisions per month

with the present port and railway facilities. Warm weather will soon be approaching and the hardships incident to present climatic conditions will soon be largely removed.”¹

But warm weather would also bring the German offensive.

¹ To Baker, February 2, 1918.

XXII

STATECRAFT ON TRIAL

THE conference between the British and American chiefs having arranged that one hundred and fifty of the battalions in our training camps should join the British, the Supreme War Council settled to its long controversial meetings of the Third Session (January 30–February 2) which considered not how to win the war, but how to keep the war from being lost. Wills clashed, angry words were exchanged, national tempers were lost in the pursuit of Allied amity.

There were the statesmen, each mindful of retaining power with his people, lest he be unsaddled: Lloyd George, with his supple mind, never at a loss for a word, his bushy hair then only just streaked with white, changing his attitude to suit the moment's demand, never allowing what he said yesterday, if he remembered it, to interfere with what was the thing to do or say today; Clemenceau, with the bright, shrewd eyes of youth, mouth hidden under his mustache, a tried old blade, razor-edged for a concrete phrase which dismissed oratorical poses in discussion, the while his cynicism and own brand of fatalism were but the servant of the only love he knew, France, in which he apparently vested his personal hopes of immortality; Orlando, adroit opportunist, adrift between the distinctively French logic of Clemenceau and the winning art of Lloyd George's winged resourcefulness, as he looked right, left and front for the sustaining hands of Britain, France and America in Italy's distress.

There were the soldiers, commanding their huge armies, each ambitious to safeguard his army's strength as his own and his country's own, and to retain his command until victory. And they, more than the statesmen, were carved clear in racial character by the national military tradition on barracks, drill grounds and battle-fields, as exponents of the class which trains for the supreme contest of nationalism. Fontenoy, Malplaquet and Waterloo were chapters of history closer to them than to the statesmen.

For the French: Foch of the expressive mustache, the dramatic gesture which seemed to be brushing away cobwebs spun of words and which he used as substitute for words over his maps, but in council he could be again the Professor Ferdinand Foch, author of the *Principles of War*, drilling fundamentals into his pupils; Weygand, his round head compact as a diamond of what the French call intelligence as peculiarly their own national gift, able to translate Foch's gesture into words and later, when Foch became generalissimo, getting his chief so habited to him that Foch might explain a battle plan entirely by gestures and a few exclamations from under the quivering mustache.

The British were of different types, but each a most British type of the amalgam of races that made the little islands the seat of empire: Haig, Oxford and Sandhurst, holding the manner of both with his British officer's slight stoop, a thoroughbred Scotch laird, not of the ruddy-faced and hearty type, but reserved, his even manner concealing the fire within, sensitive, formal, resolute, bearing himself with a certain aloof dignity that seemed to make him a British constitutional fixture as the head of his army; tall, angular Sir Henry Wilson, the map of rugged Ulster carved in his bony face, uncertain how to place his long arms and legs when he sat down as though this were his first experience in a chair, free in his talk and characterizations in Scotch-Irish realism and Scotch humor, bound to irritate Haig a little as Haig irritated him, his philosophy as sympathetic to the flexible catch-as-catch-can of Lloyd George's philosophy as that of Haig was remote; and Robertson, neither Oxford nor Sandhurst, who had fought and labored his way in self-education from the ranks to a marshal's baton, with his square jaw and beetling brows above his thickset draught-horse figure, who would look the part of a captain of Beefeaters in the Tower to the taste of Henry VIII.

After a session was over the others would tarry and exchange anecdotes and jokes, but Haig would pick up his papers and go after bows and quiet parting words. The others, aware how correct and clear headed he was, might wonder just how human he was and what he really thought, only to learn afterward, when he left all his papers with the British Museum, not to be published for fifty years, that this would be the privilege of a later generation; but they did learn

that, although he did not appear to be a very good fellow, he gave the rest of his life to fighting for better care of the disabled men who fought under him. They were all the laird's own clansmen.

There was Cadorna, ever conscious of the Italian disaster under his command as being an adventitious misfortune against overwhelming odds of which he was the scapegoat, but which he was sure could have been averted if the Allies had come to his aid, and turned into victory if they had given him the support that would have enabled him to fulfil his great dream of an offensive which would have put Italy's ancient enemy Austria out of the war. In that case, he was sure that all the gentlemen around him, who saw him as a beaten commander, would have been engaged in dictating terms of peace instead of their present plight.

From the land of the redskins overseas, which Europe had known had some sort of a little regular army as a national police force, came that white Indian, Pershing, who had never commanded as many as five thousand men until his expedition across the Mexican border in pursuit of Villa: as American as any man could be who went from a farm in Missouri to West Point; a man tightly laced together, with a head as compact of American horse sense as Weygand's of French intelligence, ears close to the head, a pattern for West Point cadets no less than when he was second lieutenant. His Allied colleagues had thought that he would bring over a slouchy excursionist sort of mob, buttons of blouses unbuttoned, but, lo, he was forming them all in the West Point mould in the rigid discipline which his military text books had taught him was necessary in order to win wars. He might appear with a warm smile of greeting, but canny, watchful, the lips straightening to a thin line, he could be a pillar of flint at the first faint signal from afar of a plot to purloin any of his men-children whom he knew best how to make into soldiers. As their father he concealed any feeling for them lest that would make him appear soft enough to accept excuses.

It would not be easy for any mind, or group of minds, of another nation to dominate any one of these men, each of whom had been accustomed to dominate in his own world from company to army commander, and subject only to orders from his national superior.

Pershing was as different from Bliss as Haig from Wilson, and Bliss as American as the son of a poor professor in a small inland

college could be. Bald-head, drooping mustache, he bent over his papers, and he could read them whether in French, German or Russian, listening at the council table. When the lips twitched and he pulled the mustache, they knew he had something he might like to say, but that did not mean that he would say it. General Rawlinson, who succeeded Wilson as British military representative when Wilson became British chief-of-staff, called him Buddha.

As the American statesman on the Council Bliss had no premier-ship to retain, no hope that he would ever be a candidate for the Presidency; as the American soldier on the Council he had to retain no army command in the field. This gave Buddha advantages on the stage of which the cast has now been given, subject to change, with Bliss a permanent fixture to the end.

But, before we proceed with the play, it is worth while to state further in Bliss' own words the governing rules of this unprecedented political and military Sanhedrim, which was in the very inner of the inner closets surrounded by the guards of Argus-eyed censorship.

"The Permanent Secretarial Staffs are the secretaries of the four military sections. It has been agreed that each of them shall keep independent minutes and that after each meeting these secretaries meet and compare their independent minutes and from them make up one official document which all will agree to accept at the official minutes of that meeting. This cumbersome process seems to be necessary because immediately after its adjournment the members of the Supreme War Council scatter to their respective countries, and if the minutes were not agreed upon and approved before the next meeting, there would be interminable discussion as to what was actually done at the preceding meeting."

In this, war-censorship turned over to those secretaries in writing historical records a task in elision and toning which compromised in discreet conventionalization that was as free from a literal transcription as from journalistic coloring. On the record no member said anything offensive to another member, all arguments were advanced in courtly and amicable manner. Bliss' own view of the historical value of those troublesome *procès-verbaux* to the secretaries was expressed in a letter after the war in which he refers to "the inconceivable folly of having sessions of the heads of great governments discussing and taking action on the affairs of the world without hav-

ing a daily abstract of all views that were expressed.”¹

He gave an example in the course of this correspondence of the kind of minutes that were kept of the meetings of the Supreme War Council:

“An important meeting of the Supreme War Council was held at the beginning of June, 1918. Sir Maurice Hankey recorded the minutes. The Germans had begun, a few days before, their drive of May 27th. They had routed the three French armies under General Franchet d’Esperey. To meet the wild clamor of the French people, Franchet d’Esperey was relieved from his command but was immediately reassigned to a command of the armies of the East at Salonika, where he relieved General Guillaumat who had been performing his duties there to the entire satisfaction of the Allies.

“Immediately on the assembling of this Session, the British made a most violent attack upon the French on account of the action taken in the case of Franchet d’Esperey; they said that in a similar case they had relieved Gough, had ordered him home and had given him no command; that the French had rewarded Franchet d’Esperey, not merely by at once giving him a very important independent command, but a command over an Allied army in which the British were largely represented; and that all this had been done without any knowledge on the part of the British or any other of the Allies.

“What I have said gives no real idea of the intensity of the situation created by these and other statements. They evoked from the French such a heated reply as made some present apprehensive of an open and complete rupture. Had such a rupture come, the minutes of that meeting would undoubtedly have been full and complete because that would have been necessary in order to explain the rupture, but when all parties concerned realized the danger that was involved, and they had cooled down and reached an agreement in the matter, it seemed to have been tacitly agreed that there should be no record of what happened. And yet what happened then and on other occasions would be of great importance to anyone in studying the European international psychology of the present moment. It would throw a great light on the real relations existing between two of the great powers of the Entente.

“But it was not often that such matters came to a head at a formal session of the Supreme War Council. We all knew that these formal sessions were preceded by so-called informal meetings of the three Prime Ministers. What happened at those meetings is of quite as much importance to the historian as what happened at the formal Sessions yet nothing will ever be known of what happened there unless Messrs. Lloyd

¹ To Henry White, December 27, 1921.

George, Clemenceau and Orlando kept their own private memoranda and some day publish them.”¹

To have published this at the time of the Château-Thierry crisis of the third German drive of 1918 would have been equally as unwise for Allied morale’s sake as to have published the minutes of the meetings of January 30–February 2, with which we are at present concerned, when Bliss was established at Versailles and he set for himself a task as definite as Pershing’s in training his army, that of unified command.

“Previously the Allies had held together through disaster after disaster greater than those which have dissolved former coalitions. . . . It was not until after many of these disasters had occurred that the step was taken that might have averted all of them. It was not until it seemed that the last dollar was extracted, the last available man put into the field, that it was seen that all resources must be pooled, which meant putting them in one control.

“Had there been one common unified plan the defection of Russia would have instantly made evident the necessity of modifying this plan to meet the defection. With these various war aims in view, the British army on the Flanders front hammered away at the Flanders front; France dealt her blows north and east of Paris; while Italy pursued her war against Austria in the Julian Alps and about Valona. In addition to all this, any threat against India, by propaganda or force of arms, aroused the greatest apprehension in all English minds. . . . Russia had mobilized—no one knows how many soldiers. Some say 20,000,000, and the least estimate 12,000,000, only to bring her and her Allies disaster and to the enemy courage and hope. More than that, the Russian collapse would, in time, have opened to that enemy the great granary of Europe.

“The Central Powers had only to hold on to what they had already won; the burden of the offensive had been definitely imposed upon the Allies, and with the promises of food and petroleum supplies from the Balkans and Russians—without which it had been possible to support the populations of Germany and Austria for three years—there seemed good ground for believing that the defense could be maintained almost indefinitely.”²

Owing to Bliss’ judicial attitude of detachment from European racial antipathies his own digest ought to be the most literal available picture when he was present at the meetings of the soldiers and

¹ To Henry White, January 5, 1921.

² Bliss’ final official report to the Secretary of State, February 6, 1920.

statesmen, but he does not emphasize the heat of the altercations. Pershing once remarked as proof of his patience that he had got through a session with his colleagues without having sworn once.¹

No one of the statesmen and generals was a hero to any of the others, especially in this period when no one had any victories to report. Haig and Pétain had a testy set-to about the old question of the British taking over more line. Haig said the British army had active sectors while the French had long stretches of quiet sectors; his men got only one leave a year and the French got leave every four months. Pétain said that his men held the line very thinly against a possible heavy forthcoming attack, that the law of France required leave every four months. They agreed to appoint a joint committee to consider the matter.

Both presented a disheartening picture of their inadequate numbers to meet the German offensive, a responsibility that reverted to the statesmen. There were references to the importance of Allies forcing their slackers to fight. Lloyd George said he was bewildered by the rapidity with which both the British and French armies were disappearing. He turned on Orlando. The Italians had 1,440,000 against the enemy's 860,000, and the French and British even numbers with the Germans. Why should not the Italians send divisions to the western front as an offset to the divisions that the French and British had sent to the Italian front?

Orlando was not convinced that the great immediate danger might be on the western front. Why should not Italy have her share of American divisions? Germany might decide to send divisions to Rumania to force Rumania's acceptance of peace terms (which was being much bruited at the time). This would release masses of Austrian troops against Italy.

With her discouraged troops back on the Piave, while Italy was short of coal and wheat, the victory, which would bring the prizes Italy had bargained for as the reward of entering into the war, seemed a very intangible promise. The secret treaty which Britain, France and Russia had concluded with Italy had not been published to the world. It would have been bad propaganda in America. The important clause read:

¹ To the author.

"By the future treaty of peace Italy shall receive: The *Trentino*; the whole of Southern Tyrol, as far as its natural and geographical frontier, the Brenner; the city of *Trieste* and its surroundings; the county of Gorizia and Gradisca; the whole of Istria as far as the Quarnero, including Volosca and the Istrian Islands, Cherzo and Lussin, as also the lesser islands Plavnik, Unia, Canidoli, Palazzuola, S. Pietro Nerovio, Asinello and Gruica, with their neighboring islets."¹

There were several copies of this pact in Bliss' papers. Apparently he kept each copy that came his way, as a reminder. It lay heavy on his mind through the Peace Conference, but for reasons quite anti-thetic to the one which kept it heavy on the mind of Orlando and Baron Sonnino, the Italian foreign minister, who was present at this session of the Supreme War Council.

The Italians could not forget how the French and British had courted the Italians to get Italy into the war; how she was assured that her entry would turn the balance against the Central Powers quickly (as later America was assured that her entry would), and soon her conquering troops would parade in the Trieste of her dreams and her flag fly over the Tyrol in triumph. The Allies' need of the Italian army in 1915 had been almost as desperate as the present need of the American.

"Baron Sonnino said that in the last speeches of Mr. Lloyd George, President Wilson and M. Pichon his own countrymen felt they had been left out in the cold. He felt bound to speak frankly on this subject. He thought that some announcement should be made of the Allied war aims which would satisfy the aspirations of the Italian nation.

"Italy's part in the war, and what she might expect to obtain as the result of the war, had, he conceived, been placed rather in the shade. In the speeches alluded to above, attention had been drawn to the rectification of the Italian front, and nothing had been said about such territorial adjustments as would give Italy definite security for the future. That security it was necessary to insure, because Italy came into the war with only this object in view. Referring to the naval situation, he wished to point out that although Italy was three times as strong as Austria in these waters, she could not yet hardly venture into the Adriatic. He reminded the Council that prior to Italy's entering the war, Austria offered her certain territory but not enough to guarantee her real security. He wished to conclude by saying that no declaration could be accepted which suggested any renunciation of Italy's legitimate claims."

¹ The Pact of London signed April 26, 1915, by Sir Edward Grey, Jules Cambon, Count Benckendorff and Marchese Imperiali.

Certainly it would have sounded an awkward note if President Wilson had supplemented his war cry "to make the world safe for democracy," in encouraging our people and soldiers to their utmost, with an appeal to make Trieste and the Trentino Italian territory.

The Italian foreign minister had much to say on the fourth and last day of the session when members were considering the public statement of the results of their prolonged labors to satisfy the world's intense interest. Sonnino "deprecated introducing into the declaration anything which might savour of dictation to the enemy nations in regard to the management of their own affairs." Lloyd George said that "to state that one of the objects of the Allies was to break down the domination of the military caste might wound the *amour-propre* of Ludendorff and Hindenburg, but there were in the enemy nations many who disliked militarism as much as the democratic countries who were fighting the Central Powers." Sonnino disagreed. "Any attempt to dictate to enemy countries the form of government they should adopt would lay us open to the retort, 'It is not business of yours; if we wish to be slaves, let us be slaves.'"

The argument continued, Lloyd George holding that the real barrier to peace was "an unrepentant and aggressive military caste," and Sonnino replying, "National *amour-propre* will still defy you," with Lord Milner agreeing with Sonnino but telling Sonnino that the discussion had better end as the majority were against them. Then Sonnino wanted to be sure that the proceedings were kept absolutely secret.

After some further discussion it was decided to adopt "Mr. Lloyd George's text followed by M. Clemenceau's peroration, subject to final verbal alterations already agreed upon."

Clemenceau, the accomplished journalist, who never indulged in eloquence in council where his thought congealed in logic, was good at the kind of language with which the world was familiar at the time when the high priests of counsel had a message for the oracle's lips.

"The splendid soldiers of the free democracies have won their place in history by their immeasurable valor. Their magnificent heroism, and the no less noble endurance with which our civilian population are bearing their daily burden of trial and suffering, testify to the strength of those.

principles of freedom which will crown the military success of the Allies with the glory of a great moral triumph."

It is not known whether Lloyd George or Clemenceau, or one of the secretarial staffs wrote (possibly ghost-writing was responsible for all) . . . "a unanimity no less complete both as regards the military policy to be pursued and as regards the measures needed for its execution, will enable the Allies to meet the violence of the enemy's onset with grim and quiet confidence, with the utmost energy, and with the knowledge that neither their confidence nor their steadfastness can be shaken."

A realistic summary of the session might well be that little had been achieved toward definite measures of coördination except cheering words as a finale of the controversies, but when we turn to the conclusions and decisions which were not made public we find the constructive influence of Bliss revealed in his use of the power and the war aims of the nation he represented.

XXIII

HIS LABORS FOR UNITY

"THE great value of the Supreme War Council consisted in bringing together the political heads of the governments . . . in causing each to consider these problems not only in the light of its own interests but in that of others."¹

The poison of their treasured irritations was emptied on the council table; their emotions exhausted, each could be sympathetic in the mutual narration of common difficulties as chiefs of democracies; then came the give and take in the consciousness that they must gain some agreements out of their parley; and, finally, an exchange of good wishes on parting, each with something reassuring to report to his people.

As a first premise in deciding on a policy at the important third session, "it was assumed that no decision in favor of the Allies could be obtained before the arrival of the American army should turn the equilibrium; and it was further assumed that this could not take place until 1919." Having taken it for granted that Britain would be safe from invasion in 1918, the Council agreed on a strengthening of the Allied positions, maintaining the limit of their man-power and increasing their output of munitions for defense, with the exclusion of any offensive ventures by any Ally unless a favorable situation warranted it. The Allied front was to be "treated as a single strategic field of action and all arrangements dominated by this consideration."

Then it was agreed that the war must be won on the western front. Any eastern campaign should be dismissed except Allenby's in Palestine. Clemenceau opposed this at first because it might withdraw troops from France, but agreed to it when he was convinced that it would not. Bluff General Robertson opposed the Palestine project by saying that "whoever prepared that paper did not know what he was talking about."

The next and most vital problem contemplated a general reserve

¹ Bliss' final report to the Secretary of State, February 6, 1920.

which could be ready for prompt dispatch to any point in the line endangered by an enemy's concentrated attack. This was the issue nearest to Bliss' heart, this the first step in military coördination on which his mind was set with all the determination of the enemy in trying to break through the trench line. No soldier could deny the wisdom of a general reserve on principle. Haig and Pétain agreed to it, both recognizing that its movement must be subject to central orders. But the principle accepted, Clemenceau put the questions: Who will command it? Will it be a reserve for the whole front from the North Sea to the Adriatic? How shall it be composed?

Inevitably a Frenchman must command it. The French, with their traditional experience in the command of large armies, would not brook any other conclusion, while the British, after their three years' *liaison* with the French, by no means had sufficient respect for any French commander to incline them to yield such power to him.

The Italians saw their own adherence as impracticable and looked for American divisions as their own reserve. It was their idea that the American army best be concentrated in Italy and make the downfall of Austria the first step toward victory.

The discussion continued, Bliss insisting that some central authority must be responsible for the reserve and where and when it should be used. So, while the German legions were forming for their offensive the statesmen and soldiers were making no definite progress toward action on Joint Note 14, the Military Representatives had adopted on January 23 favoring a general reserve. Then Bliss offered a resolution which had a concrete plan, and said in support of it:

"It did seem necessary now to decide whence the reserve should be drawn. If the commanders-in-chief could agree on a single man to command all the reserves that would be the best plan. But to select a single man might prove impossible, and some other solution would have to be found. The immediate question was not so much command as control. . . .

"If the Supreme War Council cannot itself solve the problem of a General Reserve it will have failed in the principle function which it was created to perform, unity of control and action; because, in the approaching campaign, the control and direction of a strong General Reserve is the only thing that will secure unity of purpose over three theatres of war which are now to be regarded as single theatre.

"The Supreme War Council has already directed that the general attitude on the western front shall, in general, be a defensive attitude. Therefore in the creation of an Inter-Allied General Reserve, the primary object must be the preservation of the integrity of a defensive line at the point or points most seriously threatened. It cannot be supposed that those who direct and control the reserve will use it to precipitate an offensive contrary to the accepted general plan. They can only direct it in its entirety or in part toward the threatened point where it immediately falls under the sole command of the commander-in-chief of that part of the front. If, when the enemy had been repulsed, there should appear an opportunity for an offensive, it must be assumed that if there be any considerable force of the reserve still unengaged, those who will control it will immediately send it to the commander-in-chief who is in a position to make the offensive."¹

It would appear that no British or French commander-in-chief could fail to accept this reasoning in fact as well as principle. Weighing against racial and national antipathies and jealousies was the significant insistence of the American representative when, as Clemenceau bluntly stated it, "America must win the war."² There was another influence which touched all the Allies, as Bliss stated it later:

"Napoleon was a great psychologist. He thoroughly understood the inherent weaknesses of national human nature. His career, better than any other, illustrates the point now being emphasized. He, himself, toward the end fought coalitions with coalitions. In some of his campaigns he brought together under his single control a group of peoples naturally hostile to each other, heterogeneous and dissimilar in national instincts and longings, but not so heterogeneous and dissimilar as the forces recently gathered from the ends of the earth—white, black, yellow and brown—to defeat the Central Powers.

"When he was successful in the management of such a coalition, his success was due to absolute unity of command, and, as a consequence of this unity, coördination of effort. He had both political and military control. He used the single and undivided strength of his combinations to take instant advantage of whatever weakness may have been developed in the looser combination opposed to him. And when he failed, it was due to the same cause—that which held the Allied and Associated Powers together to the end and which overcame any disposition of his opponents to pull apart and held them together to the bitter end—overwhelming and absolute fear. No nation any longer trusted him. They all feared

¹ American Minutes, Third Session of the Supreme War Council.

² Ibid.

him. They knew that it was their ruin or his. None could have the slightest hope that by a voluntary separate peace it could attain its own ends better than by adhering to the alliance. All knew that their sole hope was in the alliance."¹

At the close of the third session he wrote to Baker:

"I doubt if I could make anyone not present at the recent meeting of the Supreme War Council realize the anxiety and fear that pervades the minds of political and military men here. If no collapse comes this year in Germany or Austria, or both, they believe that the most they can do is to prevent the Germans from breaking their line; that if complete peace is restored between the Central Powers and Russia and Rumania they doubt their ability to hold their line. They openly state that their hope is in the man-power of the United States. . . . If we do not make the greatest sacrifices *now* and, as a result, a great disaster should come, we will never forgive ourselves nor will the world forgive us. If we do everything that we can now, and if that 'all that we can' is a reasonably large effort, I believe that the situation will be safe. But we have no time to lose."

Lloyd George and Foch favored an executive committee to act in place of the Military Representatives in control of the Reserve. Bliss opposed this.

"It is not wise to waste effort by doing a thing which it is not necessary to do. It is, therefore, not wise to create an organization to do that which another organization has already been created to do. It is not wise to superimpose one agency upon another doing the same thing. The only possible result will be to produce unnecessary confusion, friction, and delay, at a time when there should exist the utmost clearness of cool and unbiased vision, the utmost harmony, and the utmost rapidity of action."

But Lloyd George persisted for the superimposed agency, with Foch at its head, as the man of greater experience, instead of Weygand, the French Military Representative. It also had the advantage of relieving the statesmen definitely of any responsibility for military control. But Bliss had gained the main point he had in mind in the amended resolution which did provide for the control he advocated as the most practicable form feasible at present. The Executive Com-

¹ Bliss' final report to the Secretary of State, February 6, 1920.

mittee¹ was to determine the strength and composition of the reserve, select its stations, arrange for its transportation and concentration, and "to decide and issue orders as to the time, place and period" of its employment. When moved to a critical point it passed under the command of the commander-in-chief of the army "to whose assistance it was consigned."

Foch was chosen to represent France and as President of the Executive Committee; Sir Henry Wilson to represent Britain, General Luigi Cadorna to represent Italy, and Bliss the United States. It would seem that now the Executive Committee had only to assign the divisions and form the Reserve.

But there were circumstances favoring delay. In some quarters there remained a conviction that the German mobilization on the western front, which was so widely exploited in the press of the Central Powers, was a blind for a German movement in the East to end Rumania's doubt, put Serbia, and perhaps Italy, out of the war. In this hypothesis the Bismarckian maxim of deceiving the enemy by telling him the truth was to apply. That question of how many divisions were to compose the Reserve and who would supply them had yet to be answered. Bliss, holding his patience, had seen the Executive Committee advance as far as conferences with the commanders-in-chief when he departed for London on February 10 to attend the sessions of the Inter-Allied Council on War Purchases and Finance. For the other groups for coördination, including the pooling of shipping, were continuing their labors at the same time that the Military Representatives sought to harmonize all resources in coördinate military action.

"I think the Council has accomplished important work in the line of coördinating expenditures with the result, it is hoped, of preventing unnecessary duplications of purchases. But of all this, Mr. Crosby is keeping the Treasury fully informed. I think my work with the Council will finish today and I would return to Versailles this evening or tomorrow, were it not that I want to go with our Ambassador to Winchester to see our troops that have just arrived there coming from the various

¹ For practical purposes the Executive War Board was the same as the Executive Committee; but the author has referred to it as the Executive Committee which was the term that appeared in documents and references outside the records of the Supreme War Council.

places in Ireland where they were landed after the sinking of the *Tuscania*. I think that I should not leave here without seeing them.”¹

The *Tuscania* had been torpedoed off the north coast of Ireland. According to the first report, two thousand American soldiers on this British liner had been lost. No news could have been more ruthlessly convincing to the Germans of the success of their submarine warfare, and no news could have been more ghastly or disheartening for the Allies at this stage of the war, and no relief greater to them than the later report that all except a few men were safely ashore in England.

Continuing in the same letter, Bliss wrote:

“Doubtless you have already seen the efforts that are being made to throw the Supreme War Council into politics, with what success cannot now be said. As I told you last December, political attack is invited by the presence of political men on the Council, especially such men as Prime Ministers. Every enemy of Lloyd George, for example (and he has many), finds an easy way to attack him by making false allegations as to his surrendering British control over British troops and thus appealing to national prejudices. It is difficult to see how such allegations can be denied without making public all the conclusions of the Council.”²

When Lloyd George took the floor in the Commons to face his critics and possibly a vote of censure, he was in his best form as the master optimist among the war statesmen in making the most of the Supreme War Council's achievement and of American support of its program.

“It is not merely the policy of this Government, it is the policy of the great Allied Governments in council. There is absolutely no difference between our policy and the policy of France, Italy and America in this respect. . . .

“I hesitated for some time as to whether I should not read to the House the very cogent document submitted by the American delegation which put the case for the present proposal. It is one of the most powerful documents, one of the ablest documents ever submitted to a military conference in which they urged the present course, and gave grounds for it. I think it is absolutely irresistible, and the only reason I do not read it to the House is because it is so mixed up with the actual plan of operations that it will be quite impossible for me to read it without giving

¹ To Baker, February 12, 1918.

² Ibid.

away what the plan of operations is. [Cheers.] I only wish I could. I hesitated for some time, because I am certain if I read that to the House of Commons it would not be necessary for me to make any speech at all, because the case is presented with such irresistible logic by the American delegation that I, for one, do not think there is anything to be said against it, and that was the opinion of the Conference.”¹

There was no vote of censure. Lloyd George had temporarily restored confidence in the Supreme War Council and himself. Meanwhile, nearly three weeks after the decision to form it, the General Reserve was still in the paper stage. The Executive Committee decided that the reserve on the Italian front should consist of six Italian divisions and four of the French which had gone to the assistance of the Italians. But the main problem was to get the eight divisions each that the British and French armies were to assign for the Reserve on the endangered western front—a total in human flesh of more than two hundred thousand men, but only one-tenth of the grand total of the Allies in France. Instead of assigning the divisions, Haig and Pétain raised objections to the plan of control.

Then, March 2, in his reply to the joint note of the Executive Committee of February 27, Haig took a definite stand.

“An enemy offensive appears to be imminent on both the English and French fronts. To meet this attack I have already disposed of all the troops at present under my command, and if I were to earmark six or seven divisions from these troops, the whole of my plans and dispositions would have to be remodeled. This is clearly impossible, and I therefore regret that I am unable to comply with the suggestion conveyed in the Joint Note.”

He foresaw a wider employment than the Executive Committee contemplated; reserve assistance might have to be by rotation of divisions, or a whole army might have to act to aid another army.

“To meet any emergency on the Franco-British front, I have arranged as a preliminary measure with the Commander-in-Chief of the French armies for all preparations to be made for the rapid dispatch of a force of from six to eight British divisions with a proportionate amount of artillery and subsidiary service to his assistance.

“General Pétain has made similar arrangements for relief or intervention of French troops on the British front. These arrangements, both

¹ Parliamentary Report in the *London Times*, February 20, 1918.

French and British, are now being completed, and zones of concentration opposite those fronts are most vulnerable and likely to be attacked are being provided."

Thus Haig and Pétain had struck hands, Haig taking the official brunt of the decision since he would be turning over British troops while Pétain would be turning over French troops to the command of Foch, the Frenchman, who was President of the Executive Committee, and supposedly in the confidence of Premier Clemenceau. With the German concentration forming between Rheims and Ypres it appeared at the time it might strike either against the British or the French front, and either Haig or Pétain wanted every fresh shock division at his disposal if the attack came against him.

If either found his line in danger of breaking, then he must depend upon the other's decision that he had troops to spare to go to his colleague's aid. Meanwhile, the section of Allied opinion which favored unity of control supposed that the Reserve was already formed, although official whispers were passed in London by the British government to influential persons opposed to it that it was as yet only in contemplation. The subject had been completely veiled by the military censorship lest the enemy learn of the disposition of the Reserve. At the same time it was considered good policy to convince him that the Reserve was already mobilized.

"Haig's reply was before the Executive Committee at its meeting of March 4. General Foch was very angry. He proposed that the prospective governments be informed that we could not form the Reserve. I objected on the ground that we were ordered to form it; that if we ourselves agreed that it was a physical impossibility for any particular nation to contribute it, we would temporarily exempt it; that we could form a reserve, if necessary, without the British.

"Moreover, I said I believed Haig did not understand the matter; that if we sent our British colleague (then General Rawlinson, very intimate and friendly with Haig) to British headquarters to explain it, and show our map which made it clear that not a single division would be taken from the British front unless a situation occurred that would convince Haig himself that it was proper to do so; that both the British and French agreed that the attack would come against either the British right or French left; and that all that was desired was to have a portion of the British contribution to the Allied Reserve to be concentrated about Amiens and a portion of the French in the rear of their left,—that if we did that, Haig would probably consent. So Foch's proposition was ap-

proved subject to the result of Rawlinson's interview for which twenty-four hours was allowed."¹

There could be no doubt now of the enormous force the Germans had mobilized. The blow might come any morning. Hours had become precious. Bliss sent a cable to the President stating the situation and urging him not to abandon the idea of the Reserve. The letter to General Sir Henry Rawlinson—who had succeeded General Sir Henry Wilson as Military Representative after Wilson became the British chief of staff—was a compromise to meet the commanders-in-chiefs' objections.

The value of quotations of portions of it is in the foresight which events justified in the greatest crisis of Allied arms:

"There are only two ways that I can conceive of as practicable for having an Inter-Allied General Reserve. The first of these is to have it by a sort of 'gentleman's agreement' between the respective Commanders-in-Chief. The practicability of this way assumes that all the Commanders-in-Chief will cordially and without hesitation agree as to the time and place where the real necessity of the Inter-Allied Reserve will come. The second way is to designate this Inter-Allied Reserve in advance and in some more or less general way, and at the same time under conditions which will assure, as nearly as is humanly possible, that it will be disposable at the time and place where the emergency demands it. . . .

"We have been informed that under an agreement entered into by two of the Commanders-in-Chief they have made an agreement by which either will assist the other to the extent of a certain number of divisions in case the latter is hardly pressed and needs them. But we are also informed that if one of these Commanders-in-Chief declines to contribute to the formation of the Inter-Allied General Reserve the other will also refuse to contribute to it although he had previously, under certain conditions, agreed to do so. Does not this indicate a spirit which might render nugatory any 'gentleman's agreement' unless it can be enforced by some power outside of those who made the agreement?

"The whole question, therefore, depends upon some sort of a reasonable assurance that the Inter-Allied General Reserve will be available at the time and place required and that at the same time the Commanders-in-Chief shall not be hampered in the disposition of their national forces in the maintenance of that part of the line for which they are responsible. Surely each Commander-in-Chief is vitally interested in knowing that such a force will be available if he requires it. If he can be reasonably assured that his operations and dispositions will not be hampered by its

¹ Letter to Baker, August 26, 1921.

creation I should think it likely that his objections to his taking any part in it would disappear. . . .

"When the critical time and place are known by common consent (and if it cannot be known by practically common consent, how can a 'gentleman's agreement' be carried out?) it may happen that all of the reserve divisions on a certain front, say for example the British, have been used up, while there are still eight disposable divisions on the French front and eight on the Italian front. In that case, the British contribution to the General Reserve will be engaged on its own front, which is just where it ought to be, and the disposable Inter-Allied General Reserve will consist of the disposable French and Italian divisions.

"It is conceivable that, when the time comes, all of the components of the Inter-Allied General Reserve will be engaged on their own fronts; and it is further conceivable that at that time the attack may be so heavy that any or all of the fronts may be broken; and, finally, it is conceivable that the breaking of one of these fronts may involve an irretrievable disaster while one or both of the others may, temporarily, withdraw without fatal result. But, when all the commanders are being so hard pressed, which of them is likely to listen to the appeals of another? Yet the fate of the war may depend upon there being some power able to create promptly an Inter-Allied General Reserve by taking divisions from those fronts whose retirement will not be permanently disastrous in order to save that front upon which all depends. . . .

"If such a situation were to arise on, for example, the British front, I think it would be a most sensible thing to have the British Representative on the Executive Committee take his station with the British Commander and there act with the full powers of the Executive Committee. I do not think there would be the slightest delay in acceding to the requests of the Commanders-in-Chief for the use of their designated part of the General Reserve except, perhaps, in one case. Suppose that the British front has used up the last division of its own contribution to the General Reserve; that it has become evident that the main attack is being made against that front; that the other fronts are also being hard pressed and are calling for their last divisions of the General Reserve; and, with all that, suppose that it is evident to all that unless the British front can receive additional assistance it will be broken and that the breaking of it will mean irretrievable disaster, while the breaking of the other fronts will probably mean only temporary disaster. In that case I have no doubt that the other fronts must give way and that the remaining divisions of the General Reserve must go to the assistance of the British front. What else, in such a case, would anyone do who had the power to do anything?"

Rawlinson brought back word of Haig's refusal.

Such was the impasse on the grisly dawn of an inclement Paris



WITH SECRETARY BAKER IN FRANCE

day as Bliss waited at the railroad station for the arrival of Secretary Baker, and Bliss, as he looked into the distance as though he visualized in one glance the whole Allied front and the whole Allied situation, murmured to himself, "They're all so damn indifferent, they may lose this war yet"—which was all he said, and enough to tell the thoughts that engrossed him.¹

In the course of the necessary official calls the statesmen and soldiers did not overlook their opportunity of speaking their appeals into the ear of the civil head of our war effort who was close to the President. For the moment the former mayor of Cleveland was the most important man in the world to them, and his keen mind and acute observation, in spite of his suavity, did not confuse personal with official attention. All that was told him he could check off with the views of Pershing and Bliss.

As soon as the calls were over Baker went to Versailles to "talk business" for two hours, as Bliss put it to Mrs. Bliss; and then Baker asked Bliss to return to continue the conference in the evening, when the Secretary had an experience of one of the air raids with which the Germans, having their famous long-range gun in reserve, were aiming to soften the morale of the French for the coming offensive.

"The Secretary took me into his rooms where we could talk privately. At 9:30 the lights went out. I knew what that meant. In a moment a man came and said that *Alerte No. 2* had been signalled. That means the German aeroplanes are passing the barrage fire. We heard the booming of the guns but no bombs, which are quite distinct. The proprietor bustled around the Secretary like a hen with one chicken. He insisted that we go to the office floor, which made one more floor for a bomb to drop through. We were put off in a narrow corridor where it was very stupid, so we went out to the front under the arcade where we could look over the Place. Then we heard the bombs off to the N.E. of us toward the Place de l'Opéra. It does not take long for a plane moving a hundred miles an hour to cross over Paris. So we got inside. Bombs began to drop not far away as we could tell by sound and by concussion.

"The proprietor insisted on our going down into the huge wine cellar under the hotel. He did not care about the rest of us but he was very nervous about Mr. Baker. I found a big vault of high-priced German wines (which they can't sell now) and I said that a German would think it a crime to destroy that wine! We sat there and talked and told stories till nearly midnight, punctuated every now and then by a crash. Finally

¹ To the author.

all firing stopped, we went up and at 12:15 this A.M. the raid was officially over. I had to sleep at the hotel and in the morning the Secretary came out with me for a couple of hours. I go in to lunch with him at 1 and at 7:30 I dine with Ambassador Sharp and Mr. Baker. Tomorrow at 8 A.M. I leave with M. Clemenceau on a special train for Boulogne, due to arrive in London between 3 and 4 P.M. the same day for a session of the Supreme War Council on Thursday, the 14th."¹

Bliss' bonhomie had been in good form in the cellar, but his mind was bent stubbornly on his apparently losing battle for the Reserve. In his cable to the President he had said: "If the entire line from the North Sea to the Adriatic were held by one homogeneous army its commander-in-chief would not hesitate to form his general reserve from his right and center even although he could not use any troops on his left for a general reserve. That should be the view taken in this case."

In London Bliss received through the American Embassy the President's answer:

"The government of the United States admits the possibility that it may be found impracticable to furnish British divisions for the General Reserve, because of the military situation in front of the British lines, but nevertheless it expresses the hope that there will be no abandonment of the principle established for the creation of a General Reserve, and that the Allied Powers who find themselves able to assist in creating the General Reserve will act promptly in the matter."²

This was not very firm; it might not have been wise to be very firm when we ourselves had at the best only one division which we might contribute to the Reserve. Bliss described the issue as still a burning one. He determined to keep it so. It may be said that this is immaterial history since the Allies won the war, but it happens to be history related to the closest call the Allies had to an overwhelming disaster and related in any event to the unnecessary sacrifice of many thousands of lives.

"My letter somehow (not through me, as I think, through General Foch and M. Clemenceau) came to the knowledge of the political members of the S.W.C. at its session in London, March 14-15."³

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, February 7, 1918.

² State Department, 6841, to the American Embassy in London.

³ Letter to Baker, August 26, 1921.

The letter referred to was evidently his statement to the Executive Committee, which was much the same in substance as the letter for Rawlinson to show to Haig, with the exception of this significant reminder to his colleagues of the Committee:

"The Committee created by the Supreme War Council is not an advisory one; and it is the duty of an executive committee to carry something into execution. This particular executive committee is charged with the duty of carrying into execution the mandatory will of the Supreme War Council when it decreed the creation of the Inter-Allied Reserve. The Supreme War Council is composed solely of the heads of the four great governments which constitute the Alliance for the prosecution of the war—that is to say, it is composed of four governments. . . . This Alliance has not placed it in the power of any commander-in-chief to veto its will; nor has it given to the Executive Committee any authority to listen to or to be guided by any such veto."¹

When he presented the President's answer to the session of the Supreme War Council in London, Lloyd George said it had come at the "psychological moment." But this psychological moment involved home politics. Bliss might press his point, Foch might press it, that in a crisis neither commander-in-chief might be able to part with any divisions to aid his colleague; but the British now had good reason to think that the offensive would be solely against their front. National instinct demanded that their army should defend their sea-moat, the English Channel, the life-line of the army's communications across the Channel, and not serve under a French commander for the safety of Paris. This time Lloyd George could not use American support to bolster his support of the Supreme War Council, of the General Reserve and his personal prestige, but had to ride with the tide of nationalism. It seemed no more unreasonable to Britons that they should want to keep the independence of their veteran army than that the Americans should that of their army in training.²

¹ American minutes of the Supreme War Council.

² "It is difficult now to understand how anyone could have believed that the executive body to control the Reserve would have been anything but a 'one-man' body, that there would be anything but a 'one-man' command of the Reserve, and that the 'one-man' would be anyone but General Foch. The members of the Committee would have been his staff. But this proved impossible. The fact remained that it was not merely the Chairman of an Allied Committee but the Chief of Staff of the French armies who was to give certain all important orders to the other armies." Bliss in an article on "The Unified Command" in *Foreign Affairs*, December 15, 1922.

There was noticeably a defeatist atmosphere in the attitude of the statesmen, however cheerful their front as they passed out the door of the council chamber. The same alarm presided over their confused minds as over those of lesser men, their inmost thoughts centered in the hope that the soldiers' will of steel and weapons of steel might hold the wall against the enemy's will which was strengthened by confidence of present and final victory as the climax of past victories.

Clemenceau stated that his mind was in accord with General Bliss in theory; but in practice he considered it "necessary to put off the decision for a short time"—in agreement with Lloyd George, whose subtle mind and ready word did not lack extensive and plausible reasons to make his attitude logical. Now that all the battle strength of the Germans was massed on the western front, why should not Italy return the French and British battalions with her army accompanied by some of her own to form the General Reserve? Lloyd George brought in a resolution to this effect. Let the Executive Committee proceed to Milan and use its influence with General Diaz, the Italian commander-in-chief, to that end. The resolution also proposed that the remainder of the Reserve should be made up from American divisions as they arrived.

"All this was in view of the general conviction that we were on the eve of the tremendous battle which would decide the war. As a matter of fact this battle began exactly one week from the date of the adoption of this resolution. Yet it was proposed to make a General Reserve which all wanted to contain as nearly as possible about thirty divisions—dependent upon the arrival of American divisions which were then coming at about the rate of one and a half divisions a month."¹

Having thus met the American general's insistence upon a General Reserve the Allied statesmen and generals decided that American reinforcements could not arrive in time for the Spring and Summer campaign; or, at best, "they would arrive insufficiently trained to be immediately effective."

"In view of the impending German attack they (the British) were very anxious to get back several thousand railroad cars which were being employed by the Americans. If this were done, the American commander-

¹ American minutes of the Supreme War Council.

in-chief could not handle arriving troops and supplies. The general view of the British was, therefore, that the arrival of American troops should cease. This amazing conclusion was arrived at and expressed at the very time when all political and military men were urgently declaring that the continual arrival of American troops, and in much larger numbers, was absolutely essential to Allied success in the war.”¹

It showed how grave was the crisis in the minds of the British as the event was to prove to them within a week.

“We reached Turin on the morning of the 20th,” Bliss said of the visit of the Executive Committee to Italy, “conferred with Diaz, made a fairly good plan (if time permitted it to be carried out) and arrived back in Paris at daylight on March 21—too late!”

On the morning of March 21 the most powerful and fully prepared military offensive in all history broke against the British front. Providentially it was not against the weary French, but against an army nearly if not quite in the prime of its strength. The British fought with stubborn gallantry. Gough’s Army was destroyed.

By the 25th the continuing advance had broken a gap between the British and French armies. Haig said unless he had heavy French reinforcements he must turn his army with its back on the English Channel; then inevitably the French would turn to the defense of Paris, and Pershing would have to join his fortunes to the retreating French. Pétain had not gone to Haig’s assistance promptly because he feared the attack might shift at any moment against his line. When his divisions did arrive on the British field they were without artillery and reserve munitions.

“Personally I believe the General Reserve formed and stationed as originally intended (all of which the British knew, because they had the plan and map before them) would have checked the disaster of March 21 at the outset.² Who prevented it? Who must bear the blame? But no good can come from talking about it now.”³

What Buchan calls the “iron compulsion of facts” at last broke down the barriers against unity. The seeds for unified control which had been sown by the Supreme War Council were bearing fruit. The Allied peoples were asking what had become of the Inter-Allied

¹ Bliss’ comment in the American minutes of the Supreme War Council.

² The vital point where aid was needed was in front of the location of the General Reserve on the Executive Committee’s map.

³ Letter from Bliss to Baker, August 26, 1921.

Reserve which had been supposedly mobilized for just this emergency. Obviously Foch, the chief of the Executive Committee, was the general for the task which the disaster had provided. He was charged by the British and French governments "with coördinating the action of the Allied armies on the western front. To this end he will come to an understanding with the commanders-in-chief, who are requested to furnish him with all necessary information." Information, but not troops!

Baker, Bliss, and Pershing were together in Paris. Baker sent a strong cable to the President in support of Foch's appointment with full powers.

Now we could not send our troops in too large numbers or too fast for the Allies. Lloyd George and Clemenceau made urgent appeals. The Military Representatives agreed on a Joint Note, Number 18, that only American infantry and machine guns be brought to France for temporary service in Allied divisions and corps. Baker approved this in a cable to the President but with the proviso that it must not prejudice the eventual formation of an independent American army.¹ The President confirmed Baker's decision and gave him power to act in the emergency.² Pershing went to Foch and spoke his "all we have" as at Foch's disposition, which vitalized Allied morale in a further proof that the fortunes of the Allies were our own.³

But Foch had not authority enough. He was in a mood to resign. The extended powers which he received, April 3, giving him "the strategic direction of military operations" was further confirmed and extended, April 24, in making him "Commander-in-Chief of the Allied armies." But Italy never accepted this as including the Italian army.

Thus Bliss had seen the principle for which he had labored from the first adopted not only at the front but in the speeding up of transport and the quickened pooling of shipping and supplies. Where prevision had failed and even the threat had failed, disaster had brought unity. But the preservation of that unity would be a further drain on the patience and skill of the vigilant harmonizer.

¹ Baker through Bliss, S.P.C. to W.D.-S-67.

² S.P.C.-R-39.

³ *My Experiences in the World War*. Pershing, I, 365.

XXIV

HIS OWN BEST JUDGMENT

FOR the further account of Bliss' service with the Supreme War Council we depend largely, after Baker's return home, upon excerpts from his letters to Baker. Three thousand miles from Washington, before trans-Atlantic telephonic communication, he had to act on his own judgment.

"When it comes to the discussion of these military questions which are also ones of far-reaching political effect, the other Military Representatives with the Supreme War Council have the great advantage of being in immediate touch with the political heads of their own governments. Each of them can, and does, pick up his desk telephone in the morning of any day, talk freely with the Prime Minister of his country, and receive his instructions as to whether or not to pursue the consideration of a particular question. More than once one or another of them, after we have considered at length a certain question, reports that his government desires no further action to be taken by him for the present and the matter is therefore dropped. Even by cable and at great expense I cannot do this as satisfactorily as they can by telephone,—and if necessary, the French Representative can see and talk with his Prime Minister within 30 minutes, and the British Representative can do the same within a few hours, or the latter can send someone to see him. I must rely on my best judgment as to what may or may not embarrass my own government."

It was at the focal point of information from all the Allied fronts where his colleagues were in immediate touch by telephone that he received the news, after the first German offensive had been checked, of the second begun April 7, which had been making headway for three days. At the time Foch had not yet been given full powers as generalissimo. Bliss wrote, April 10:

"In the view of both the English and the French the situation has become serious. It seems that at the conference yesterday between Haig, Foch and Wilson, Haig wanted Foch to take over the line at least as far north as Albert, thus enabling him to take out six British divisions and send them to the more northern part of the line. Foch flatly refused. Haig then proposed that Foch should send French divisions to the ex-

treme northern part of the line, to relieve six British divisions for use elsewhere. This, also, Foch refused. It was finally agreed to begin the movement (and it begins today) of the Reserve Army under General Maistre, across the Somme and north of Amiens somewhere, approximately on the line Amiens-Doullens-St. Pol.

"It seems that the question is coming to a head which General Foch indicated to me in the interview (which was the subject of a letter that I handed to you), in regard to the protection of the Channel Ports and of Paris in case the German drive penetrates a little further and threatens the junction between the British and French armies. General Wilson tells me that M. Clemenceau yesterday insisted that the British should be prepared to withdraw their entire line from the North Sea and swing it around so that the larger part of it will face nearly South. Unless such a movement were carried to a point which would result in a complete amalgamation of the British and French armies, it seems to me that it would be very dangerous. The French idea appears to be that the British should join with them even if it resulted in the complete uncovering of the Channel Ports, just as they did in 1914. The British say that in 1914 there were no U-boats and that their navy, plus a certain amount of land forces, guaranteed the Channel Ports. As long as they have the Channel Ports they can bring in supplies and troops from England and from the United States. If by any chance the Germans could get Calais and Boulogne and there establish submarine bases, it would give them complete control of the English Channel. The English are, apparently, insisting that, if worse comes to the worst, they should concentrate on a line somewhere about Abbeville on the Somme to St. Omer and thence to the sea. They say that the upper part of this line can be flooded so as to constitute an almost impassable barrier.

"What real foundation there is for the somewhat gloomy view that the British take this morning I cannot yet say. The fact, however, remains that the Germans are making headway at points where it will not require very much headway to force a complete withdrawal of the Northern line. Before it is time for this letter to go, we may be able to anticipate the future a little more clearly."

The next day, April 11, he reinforced a previous hypothesis in definite and vigorous terms which the present event and future events were to confirm.

"We never will solve the problem so long as we cling to the idea of a campaign of 1919 or 1920 in which a great fresh American army will march to the Rhine or to Berlin with exhausted Englishmen and Frenchmen on its left and right and with exhausted Germans in front of it. When two armies make up their minds to have a 'show-down' in the year 1918, it is most probable that the 'show-down' will come in that

year. Because, when one or the other side has played its last card, has exhausted its last effort, it is almost certain that it will have won or lost. This is what the Germans seem to have determined upon for the year 1918.

"And even if they should lose in this campaign and still have the nerve to hold out in the year 1919, the only way to assure that they will lose in this campaign is for America to make its man-power available in the quickest and most effective way that it can this year. The only way to guarantee a campaign of 1919 is to do our utmost in 1918. If we do that 'utmost' there may be no need of a campaign of 1919."

He made a similar statement in a letter to Lord Northcliffe, April 16:

"When one of the two sides in a war makes up its mind to have a 'show-down' in the year 1918, it is most probable that the 'show-down' will come because, if it has so made up its mind, it will play its last card and make its last effort to accomplish this end. If we are going to take any real part in assuring that this 'show-down' will result favorably to the Allies, we must bring our man-power to bear effectively within the next three or four months."

In compliance with Foch's direction Pershing was moving his pioneer First Division from Lorraine across France to the Montdidier sector, Foch being convinced that the next German offensive, granting that the second was checked, would be against the French left. In this case it would appear that the theater where the Germans would force the show-down would be entirely in the west of France. The American line of communication having been formed and constructed entirely to support an independent American army in Lorraine for that "final, shattering blow" the transfer of American forces, already in France and arriving, to the west of France precipitated an acute problem in their supply service and transport. Bliss stressed the importance of the pooling of supplies to meet this emergency in order to bring the maximum of American troops into action in 1918. He was sure the Allies had sources of supply that might be opened to us.

In reporting a conversation with Major General Nash, the British railway transportation expert, who said that we might not be able to supply our troops in their new sector from their own bases, Bliss wrote:

"I told him that in the course of this campaign we may find all of our divisions similarly situated; that in my judgment the solution of the problem is to rely on supplies temporarily from the Armies with which our divisions may be serving in this way; and that we can reimburse either the British or the French, or both, by turning over to them corresponding amounts of supplies from our depots here or by sending such supplies direct from the United States to England. However, I told him that this was a military detail which must be worked out with General Pershing. I have no doubt that it will be all satisfactorily arranged. I only mention it in order to show how the progress of the campaign may require complete changes in preconceived plans."

On April 12, in a later instalment of his weekly letter to Baker to go by the weekly courier, Bliss wrote:

"Both the English and French today seem to be quite worried over the situation. The German drive, proceeding in a northeasterly direction between Armentières and the Canal de la Bassée, is evidently heading for Hazebrouck. If they can reach this point and hold it, they will cut the only double-track railway system running north and south in the rear of the British line and east of Saint-Omer. The Germans are still making headway in that direction. The permanent success of such a movement will undoubtedly force the complete withdrawal of the entire northern part of the British line and will put the Germans in possession of the northern coal fields of France in the vicinity of Bethune. To meet such a result, General Nash tells me that the British are already making arrangements for the diversion of additional coal tonnage in order, as far as possible, to make up the deficit in French coal by landing British coal at Rouen and Dieppe."

And on the next day, April 13, in reporting the situation as it appeared to the men who were responsible for supply and transport:

"Last night I had a talk with General Nash, the British Director General of Transportation in France, and our General Atterbury. I found them still bothered about the question of the supply of our First Division which is now in reserve southwest of Amiens but which may at any moment find itself on the battle line, and they are anticipating the possibility of others, perhaps all of our divisions being moved up into that part of France.

"If the course of the campaign this spring and summer should see a gradual concentration of all the armies somewhere in that part of France which is the scene of present military activity, it is believed here by every railway expert that an independent system of supply for the American troops will be an impossibility."

Thus it appeared that our labor in building up our great supply system might be partly waste when we had to go where the war was and the Germans would not bring it to our sector.

In the letter to Lord Northcliffe Bliss urged that Northcliffe's mission to America could not do better than to stir our people to hasten the departure of troops and his own people to make every sacrifice for their prompt transport.

"If we stop thinking of a campaign of 1919 or 1920 and think only of the campaign of 1918, the one problem is how to get our own men quickest to the British and French lines. In the way which is now proposed we can get a million combatants on those two lines within a comparatively short time. I do not believe that we can get them there any other way, because I do not believe that the Germans will give us time to do so. It is all very well to talk about these exhausted and war-weary countries holding on and continuing to suffer while the Americans at their leisure form a great army and then advance to the Rhine, with exhausted Englishmen on one side and exhausted Frenchmen on the other, and exhausted Germans in front of them, but I look on this as a dream which cannot be realized."

It seemed very far from it in that hour when the Allies were apprehensive lest the second German drive should separate the British and French armies.

"I do not propose to make the United States a recruiting ground to fill up the ranks of the British and French armies," Bliss wrote to Baker. But he was convinced that with the terrific losses the British had endured and the decimation of many divisions, including the practical destruction of one British army as an organization, we must accept the plan for reinforcing the British by sending our battalions for training with them and then combining our battalions into regiments, our regiments into brigades, then into divisions and corps, to be a part of an independent army as soon as the emergency was over. It was the only way to meet the hour's need.

His difference on principle with Haig over the Inter-Allied Reserve could not influence his conviction that the bond of language and tradition made tactical coöperation and indoctrination with the British easier than with the French.

Even the active Pershing, with a fast car at his disposal, could not be in two places at once, when he had to look after the adjustments

to meet the latest disarrangement of his plans, which had been already subject to innumerable handicaps. So this record in Bliss' serial letter to Baker, which was begun April 10, and was really a diary, is further reflective of the crisis of the second offensive in which Foch's reserves were being so rapidly exhausted:

"April 12, 6 P. M.—General Foch has just sent me a message asking me whether or not the First American Division now in the vicinity of Gisors is at his disposition for service in the battle, and whether General Pershing and General Bliss need to be further consulted with reference to the employment of the Division; that it is his understanding that the Division is at his complete disposition, but that before taking steps that would commit the Division to battle he wishes to receive from General Pershing and General Bliss their concurrence. He particularly desires to be informed as to the following points:

"1. Is the Division ready to go?

"2. Is it at his complete disposition?

"3. He understands that the Commanding General of the Division is ill and wishes to know whether another commander will be designated. He would like to feel that the High Command of the Division is thoroughly familiar with his troops and conditions existing within the Division before committing it to battle. I have telephoned him that I have wired his message to General Pershing who has sole charge of everything connected with the use of the American troops and have asked General Pershing to communicate with him direct.

"Last Sunday morning General Pershing told me that when the First Division was entraining for its new station in the rear of the battle front he had found General (Robert H.) Bullard suffering from an attack of neuritis. Two or three days ago Colonel Wells of my staff (who, at the request of General Foch, is at the latter's Headquarters as a connecting officer between him and the Supreme War Council), wrote me a letter describing his visit to the different billets of the First Division which had then just arrived at its stations in the vicinity of Gisors. He said that he had found that General Bullard had gone to the Division Hospital for treatment for rheumatism. I think that Bullard is an excellent officer and I hope he is not going to be incapacitated at this juncture. The French officers who have come in contact with him at the front speak highly of him.

"April 12, (12 noon)—I have received another urgent message from General Foch saying that he has heard nothing from General Pershing in regard to the questions asked in his message noted in my 6 P. M. paragraph of yesterday, and begging me to secure an immediate answer. General Foch says that he is losing very valuable time. I have telegraphed again to General Pershing but cannot be sure whether either of my mes-

sages have reached him. He is occupied in getting his other divisions on the line where they can relieve French divisions, which accounts for the delay."

"April 12, 3:30 P. M. A telegram just received from Pershing says that he sent his reply to General Foch's message of yesterday through the commander of our First Division. A telephone message from Colonel Wells, who is at General Foch's headquarters as a *liaison* officer between it and the Supreme War Council, says that General Foch has received the message."

"April 13, 12:15 P. M. I have just received the following over the telephone from Colonel Wells:

"(General Foch, Commanding Allied Forces, reference to statement regarding First Division, transmitted through General Bliss.) I consider the First Division ready for active service. Division has received thorough training and has had considerable experience in the trenches. A brief program of exercises in open warfare is now being carried out at its present station. Permanent Commander, General Bullard, has been temporarily ill but is now on his way to join the division. Upon his arrival and upon the completion of the brief program of instruction in open warfare, there is no reason why this Division should not take its place actively wherever you desire to place it. In case you consider it urgent, Division can go in at once. Pershing."

Pershing's First was ready if Foch wanted to send it in with the British; but it was not required as the second offensive had been checked by the immortal response of Haig's men to his "Backs to the wall" call and some French support.

A note on another subject then asking for attention, when the offensives occupied the public mind, is taken from the letter by Bliss to Baker:

"On your return to Washington you will find that, during your absence on the sea, there has been a great hubbub raised all over Europe over the question as to which of the two (Count Czernin or M. Clemenceau) has made a false statement in saying, each of them, that the other has made a proposal some months ago looking toward a discussion of the terms of a general peace. Each of them says that the other has made the suggestion. There is a good deal in which Count Czernin says, to the effect that it does not matter so much which of them has made the proposal as it does as to which of them was the one who blocked the suggested movement. All the Cabinets and newspapers are 'buzzing' about the matter. I do not see why, under the circumstances, there should be so much fuss made about a plain, simple, straightforward lie. A little thing like a lie stands out against the awful black iniquity of the war so that, by contrast, it has the dazzling whiteness of an angelic virtue."

AWAITING THE NEXT BLOW

THERE was a lull after the first and second offensives, both sides licking their wounds, resting, waiting for the return of the wounded and recruits to fill gaps in the ranks, preparing, reforming, the Allies trying to ascertain where the next blow, which they regarded as inevitable, would be struck. At the end of April the first American division assigned to the British had appeared behind the British front. In April 116,642 American troops had arrived in France, giving Pershing a total of over 424,000, double the number he had at the end of January.¹ Their presence had become apparent on the landscape of France; and word spread from the ports among the people that the incoming tide was rising.

Bliss, in traveling to Foch's headquarters for a conference with him and Pershing and to the Fifth Session of the Supreme War Council at Abbeville, had a picture of war's limitless labors and devastation in the congested area of the front.

"Everywhere soldiers were repairing the roads, stringing new telegraph and telephone wire, cutting firewood in the forests for the troops at the front, cutting larger trees for the timber construction in the trenches and, pitiful to see, cutting down the magnificent great trees that lined both sides of the roads, to get out the heavy beams they need in this kind of warfare." ²

The Allied peoples had been horrified by the destruction even of orchards by the Germans in their withdrawal to the Hindenburg line in November, 1916, in order to remove cover for the enemy; but it was also in the routine course of modern warfare that the French should destroy their own towns, villages, homes and groves.

"Nearly every town and village that I passed through was filled with French troops in 'rest-billets.' The streets were blocked with their trains, ammunition parks and artillery. On the way I met other divisions coming

¹ *The War with Germany*. Ayres. p. 15.

² To Mrs. Bliss, April 26, 1918.

back from the battle, en route to their rest-billets where they will stay from two or three weeks to as many months, depending upon the extent to which they had suffered in the fight.

"The road led me through the most beautiful farming country that I have ever seen. It seemed to be all under intense cultivation. Everyone was at work,—old men, old and young women, children, and soldiers in uniform. Thousands of work-troops were engaged in repairing roads in every direction. And it is amazing to see the excellent condition in which all the roads are notwithstanding the enormous amount of heavy traffic of all kinds constantly going over them. In fact, the nearer one approaches the battle-front the better the roads are.

"Even in that part of the country which has not as yet been devastated by war, it is easy to see the terrible and long-enduring effects that the war will have on the soil of France. I passed over miles of road where troops were at work cutting down splendid avenues of trees that must have been at least from 100 to 200 years old, but which are required to provide the heavy timbers needed in field fortification work. Passing up the Valley of the Bresle from Aumale to Blangy, I passed miles of complicated trenches that had been prepared to meet a possible reverse forcing the line back that far. All the way to the extreme front the country is dug over in the same way. These complicated masses of entrenchments run for miles through the most beautiful farm land that you can imagine. But the moment they pass below the top fertile soil they come to the deposit of white chalk which underlies all of the North of France. This chalk is turned up and covers the country in all directions. You can imagine what the country is like where the actual fighting has been going on, backwards and forwards, for nearly four years. Every shell-hole is a great chalk pit and for miles these pits are so close together that the edge of one touches the edge of others on all sides of it, and so on *ad infinitum*. They tell me that it will be a hundred years before the soil which has been thus mishandled will be fit for anything." ¹

The arrival of what had once seemed to the Allies the phantom American army had become a fresh bone of contention which was to be fought over at the session at Abbeville on the first two days of May.

"The Fifth Session of the Supreme War Council was held at Abbeville on the first and second of May. The occasion of it was a rather bitter feeling on the part of the French aroused by the agreement entered into in London, a few days before, between Lord Milner and General Per-

¹ To Baker, May 4, 1918. Soil experts expressed this opinion, but in six years after the war was over the author saw what once had been a sea of shell craters recovered in green fields of young wheat by the amazing industry of the indefatigable French peasantry.

shing, in regard to the transportation of American troops. M. Clemenceau insisted on a meeting of the Supreme War Council to discuss this subject and, it being agreed to, various other matters were placed upon the Agenda in order to clean up the business of the Supreme War Council to date.

"The first subject taken up for discussion was the agreement between Lord Milner and General Pershing. When M. Clemenceau told me, a week ago yesterday, that he had called a meeting of the Supreme War Council to discuss this subject and expressed very warmly his own views about it, I insisted that it could not be discussed without the presence of General Pershing. The latter was therefore requested to be present at this Session and he was there. In the long discussion which followed neither I nor any of the Military Representatives took any part as we were already committed to the view expressed in our Joint Note Number 18 and we regarded the subject of the agreement between Lord Milner and General Pershing as one to be discussed between General Pershing, Lord Milner, Mr. Lloyd George, M. Clemenceau, and General Foch."¹

Joint Note Number 18, which was approved at the time of the crisis of the first German offensive, had implied that machine gun and infantry units were to be sent to the French as well as the British. According to the subsequent Pershing-Milner agreement six divisions were to go to the British, none to the French, and the British were to aid in the transport of divisions direct to our own sector. Pershing had had conclusive experience of the inadvisability of training our battalions mixed with the French; and Bliss held the same conviction, for reasons already given, now reinforced in practice by the fact that the first and second offensive were already over. When Clemenceau, employing the same parliamentary tactic as Lloyd George had on a previous occasion, first turned to Bliss to get his opinion, Bliss nodded toward Pershing as the spokesman.

"M. Clemenceau and General Foch claimed that the original understanding was that temporary assistance was to be given by American infantry reinforcements to both the British and the French; whereas the agreement between Lord Milner and General Pershing entirely ignored the French. They said that it was true that thus far the heaviest losses had fallen upon the British, but that now the turn of the French was coming and that their losses would soon equal those of the British. I have hitherto been entirely unable to get exact official data in regard to the losses suffered by the Allies since the German offensive began on March 21st. Both sides have done everything possible to conceal the figures. But,

¹ Letter to Baker, May 4, 1918.

piecing together various things which leaked out in the discussion, I gathered that the British losses, including prisoners, was somewhere from 320,000 to 350,000 men; and the French losses, from 50,000 to 80,000 men, —the latter figure being as likely to be correct as the former.”¹

Foch and Clemenceau had to yield to the solidarity of Bliss and Pershing, to which the Allies could not quite accustom themselves as altogether human. The Pershing-Milner agreement held.

The relations between Foch and Bliss were interesting. Bliss had opposed Foch again and again, but they always preserved an understanding personal friendship. The line which Bliss drew was between Foch the commander of the whole and Foch the Frenchman. Therein he served unity of control by making the supreme command acceptable.

In the course of the letter of May 4 Bliss called Baker's attention to one of the difficulties of Allied relations when an ambassador sought to gain a point by going to the man at the top.

“It seems to me that it would be well if Lord Reading were himself to send a communication to Mr. Lloyd George correcting his statement” (which was still being repeated to the prejudice of harmony). Sir Henry Wilson, from the British War Office by telephone, (confirmed by letter)² April 1, told Bliss that Lloyd George had word from Lord Reading in Washington that he had seen the President, and the President had agreed to send over 150,000 infantry and machine gun units every month for the next four months. This would make a total of nearly 600,000, or twenty-four divisions with the British, when the first 150,000 were only to meet an emergency. Bliss wrote on the back of the Wilson letter, “I told him that this utilization of American troops would not be permitted.” Baker who was still in Paris queried the President by cable.³ The President responded with a prompt denial:

“I agreed upon no details whatever with Lord Reading. I told him that I had agreed to the proposition of the Supreme War Council in the formulas proposed to me by the Secretary of War by cable and that I could assure him that we would send troops over as fast as we could make

¹ Letter to Baker, May 4, 1918.

² Letter in the Bliss papers.

³ Agwar, Washington, Number 79.

them ready and find transportation for them. That was all. The details are left to be worked out and we shall wish the advice of the Secretary of War as the result of his consultations on the other side.

“(Signed) WOODROW WILSON”¹

However, the persistence of the report, undenied by the British, that the British by some secret agreement were to have 600,000 American soldiers while the French got none was very exasperating to the French, who were worried about the predominance of a huge Anglo-American army on their own soil.

It was at this session that Orlando of Italy expressed a desire that Italy should be included in the terms of the agreement under which Foch had been made generalissimo.

“When it was made clear to him that this involved the power on the part of General Foch to withdraw British, French or Italian divisions from the Italian front, he modified his proposition and asked to have extended to General Foch the power of coördination alone over the Italian front that was given to him over the Franco-British front by the terms of the Doullens agreement of March 26th. This proposition was finally accepted, although General Foch seemed to regard it as a matter of indifference. . . . To give him merely those same powers of coördination, without any executive power, on the Italian front will lead either to the same friction, or to nothing at all.”

Orlando had another desire gratified in small measure. He had been importunate for American divisions on the Italian front to win the war by overwhelming Austria. Pershing ended this prolonged siege by agreeing to send him a regiment, which Orlando was sure would be of value to Italian morale out of all proportion to its numbers.

And in the Abbeville session, after these differences were settled by personal contact, the “black coats” of the Council approved several joint notes of the Military Representatives, which covered their unadvertised labors in bringing out of a chaos of information concrete conclusions upon which all could agree.

“This week I have been at it night and day,” he wrote to Mrs. Bliss previous to the session, “and that is good for my *Gesundheit*.”

Among the conclusions were that the Belgians should turn over 200 locomotives to our service of supply and transfer 6,000 soldiers

¹ Cablegram, Supreme War Council, Number 45.

to transport service; that a maritime occupation in force of the Dalmatian coast, with Americans largely assisting was impracticable; and not to press an offensive from Salonika for the present. Orlando declared that the Dalmatian coast was within Italy's territorial claims. He resisted the proposed instruction by French officers which was intended "to correct certain notorious difficulties of the Italian army." As Bliss put it, "The Italians will have nothing to do with it unless it is made to appear that the difficulties are coequal in all the Allied armies."

As usual when Bliss had a few minutes to spare, he began a letter home, another instalment waiting on the next opportunity if he were interrupted.

"You see that the construction of my letters is like that of the old cathedrals here," he explained to Mrs. Bliss. "They take a good while though not, I am led to say, several centuries, and I try to finish them in some sort of way."

He knew that his home folk liked to know what persons were present at functions he attended although they had become as familiar characters to him as Moro chieftains.

"It was a large meeting: Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Lord Milner, Sir Maurice Hankey (Sec'y of the British War Cabinet), Field Marshal Haig, Gen. Wilson (British Chief of Staff), Gen. Lansmann (Haig's Chief of Staff), Gen. Sackville-West (Brit. Mil. Rep. at Versailles), Admiral Wemyss (1st Lord of the Admiralty), Gen. Foch, Gen. Pétain, Gen. Belin (French Mil. Rep. at Versailles), Gen. Mordacq (Clemenceau's Staff), Mr. Orlando (Prime Minister of Italy), Gen. Robilant (the new Ital. Mil. Rep. at Versailles), Admiral le Bon (head of French navy), Gen. Pershing, Gen. Lochridge and myself, besides secretaries galore. . . .

"While writing the above, Col. Grant came to find me and suggested that we take a ride and see Abbeville before the Council met at 11 A. M. As you will see, that accounts for my continuing my letters at Beauvais. . . .

"At about 10 o'clock I set out to find my lodging (at Abbeville). It is my first experience in 'billeting.' There are no hotel or lodging accommodations. A French officer before the Council came to Abbeville, went to different people and told them that they would be required to provide lodging for one or more persons. On arrival I was furnished with a card informing me that I was 'billeted' on the *Sous-Préfet* of Abbeville. I think M. Clemenceau was billeted on the *Préfet*. I found the *Sous-Préfet* and

his wife most charming people. They were very cordial and attentive. The house they live in is an enormous affair around a large court yard. I had a very large room, handsomely furnished and with every convenience. I went there on arrival in order to leave my bag and acquaint myself with the place.

"Madame (I'll tell you her name tomorrow, I only know them as the *Sous-Préfet* and his wife) met me herself and showed me to my room, called the servants and told them to do everything for me. In fact she was charming. You cannot think what a relief it was to me to be treated as though I were a looked for guest. How would you and Mamma feel if a gentleman walked into the house with a gripsack and said the Chief of Police of Washington had assigned a room to him in our house? But of course, as a matter of fact, in case of people in my position and of people like those that entertained me, it was all arranged in advance. I found that Madame was intimately acquainted with Mrs. Robert Bliss of the American Embassy in Paris, although she did not know until my arrival that I was in any way connected with them."¹

Then, continuing the letter from Versailles, he tells how he went to see "the old churches of St. Sepulchre, St. Gilles and St. Vulfran. The latter has a most imposing exterior which I faced through the window as I sat in our council room in the *Chambre des Notaires*." Then he shifts his narrative to Beauvais where he spent the night in an hotel.

"Under my window in the square stood the statue of Jeanne Hachette who with the women of the city defended it against Charles the Bold. Just beyond, a block away, rise the enormous mass of the choir and transepts of the unfinished Cathedral of Beauvais, begun in 1227, carried on till about 1578, work then stopped and never finished. If completed it would be the most magnificent and largest cathedral in the world. On account of frequent air raids all lights went out early and I to bed. I got up early, had my coffee and went over to see the Cathedral. You can read all about it in your guide book so I'll not try to describe it.

"The sun was just up and the light filtering through the splendid stained glass in the great windows of the eastern end bathed all the interior in a most wonderful light. Outside where the nave ought to be are the remains of part of the preceding cathedral built in 9 hundred and something. It also would have been torn down if the new cathedral had been finished. Everything stands just as the workmen left it when they threw down their tools one day 340 years ago.

"Then I started for Paris by way of Meru—Pontoise—St. Germain. I have become quite familiar with the country roads north of Paris. The

¹ To Mrs. Adolph Knopf.

faces of the villagers seem to have grown like those of acquaintances and the very dogs on the street greet me with a bark which seems to have grown quite friendly. And the town criers and I exchange nods as they stand in the little *place* through which the one street runs and beat their drums and cry out the public notices, the calling out of more soldiers or that some farmer has lost a horse or some old woman a cow. . . . I enclose some wild flowers picked in my garden and some beech leaves from a tree in the garden planted in the time of Louis XIV when this garden formed part of the royal park."

XXVI

ALARM AT THE COUNCIL TABLE

"THIS session met at a moment which was the very crisis of the war . . . the high water mark of the war for the Germans."¹ They had struck their third blow in their campaign for the "show down" in 1918. "Both the British and the French believed that the drive would come in the North, somewhere in the vicinity of Arras, and that it would be a continuation of the first one."² The American section of the Supreme War Council had worked out a conclusion that it would be between Montdidier and Rheims; Bliss himself had taken this to Foch's headquarters and shown it to him in person, but without winning Foch away from his preconception based on the information he had from the British and French.³

Quite independently under a young American reserve officer, Major S. T. Hubbard, Jr., of American headquarters, who had proven he had a gift in this complex business, had worked out the same conclusion from his study of the German battle order, specifying the location a little more exactly as in the Aisne sector; but when this was taken to Pétain's staff May 26, hardly a sceptical interest was shown.⁴

The morning of May 27 the French and the exhausted British divisions which Foch had sent for rest to "the quiet Aisne sector" (comprising the blood-soaked Chemin des Dames) were struck by an avalanche in the most complete, overwhelming and masterly surprise in the history of the western front, if not in the war. In seventy-two hours, by the morning of May 30, the Germans had advanced over thirty miles, occupied ten miles of the Marne bank and taken over 30,000 prisoners and 400 guns.⁵

Soissons, which the French had won back in the first battle of the Marne, was again in German hands. Again stricken refugees flowed

¹ Bliss' comment in the American Minutes.

² Bliss' letter to Baker, June 1, 1918.

³ Appendix E of Bliss' final report to the Secretary of State, February 6, 1920.

⁴ Report G-II, A.E.F. May, 1918.

⁵ *History of the Great War*. Buchan. IV, 256.

along the road toward Paris in the company of detached soldiers with bloodshot eyes. Bliss' statement that this was the very crisis of the war had its justification in the rapidity of this German advance which, after the slower and highly dangerous gains of the first and second offensives, carried with its swift approach the mortal suggestion of a climax in disaster for the Allied arms.

"The meeting of the Supreme War Council today was called by M. Clemenceau to consider some question relating to the use of American troops. When he notified me, officially, that the meeting would be held, he asked me to request that General Pershing should be present.¹

"I learned in a general way from M. Clemenceau that the idea of the French is that the American troops should not form independent armies in France and that, practically, they should have no larger organization than a Division. The French General Staff are constantly harping upon what they claim to be the insufficient instruction of our Staff for large commands. I told M. Clemenceau very frankly that in my opinion there are only two men in France who can settle this question, namely, General Foch and General Pershing. General Foch is charged with the preparation and execution of all strategical plans affecting the combined armies. General Pershing is charged with the responsibility for all the details of the training and employment of American units here. If General Foch shows that the efficient execution of any of his plans requires the English or French or American troops to be used in this or that way, I do not see how any of the Governments can stand out against him so long as they agree to saddle the responsibility upon him. If General Pershing and General Foch have an irreconcilable difference of opinion on this subject, the only straight-forward course that I know of is for General Foch to formulate his views and submit them to the President of the United States—for whom General Foch is the Supreme Commander-in-Chief as much as he is for the British and French."

The night before the meeting Bliss went to Pershing's house in Paris for a conference. If they had had time for such vanities they might well have reflected that this was a strange situation confronting the two American generals who had in turn ruled the Moro Province. Pershing had word from eye-witnesses of the demoralization of the French troops as they sought to put the Marne between them and the enemy. It was that of a rout.² The breach in the protecting wall for American training and mobilization was nearer his

¹ Letter to Baker, June 1, 1918.

² The author's personal observation.

Lorraine sector this time. We had troops arriving both by way of England and through Brest, divisions half formed and scattered here and there about France. They needed only a little time to become effective. Now they might be mixed in a general retreat with soldiers whose language they did not know.

In the letter of June 1, the morning before the Sixth Session of the Council began, Bliss also wrote:

“General Pershing agrees with me as to the supreme powers of General Foch. If he and General Foch are let alone, I think they will quickly agree on any matter of real importance. The trouble may be that the French General Staff in Paris, influencing M. Clemenceau and laying great stress on what are really unimportant matters and which are very repugnant to the Americans, may produce ill feeling. . . . A great deal now depends on the political attitude. If a political demand should be made for the concentration of the French armies to save Paris, neither M. Clemenceau nor Marshal Foch may be able to resist it. We still hope that General Foch may make a counter stroke that will relieve the pressure.”

It was an impressive gathering in its frontage, in the power it represented, and yet singularly conscious that it was in the hands of bayonet-studded fate, which met for this sixth session of the Supreme War Council. The “black coats” had with them their ministers of foreign affairs, their ministers of war and marine and their generals and admirals. Clemenceau was his own war minister; Viscount Milner came from Britain. The foreign ministers were: Stephen Pichon for France, Arthur Balfour for Britain, Baron Sonnino for Italy. Foch had his Weygand; Haig had brought his own Chief of Staff; Wilson, the British Chief of Staff, had come from the War Office in London; Pershing had brought his Chief of Staff, Major General James W. McAndrew, and Chief of Operations, Fox Connor; France had her Minister of Marine, Georges Leygues, and her Admiral le Bon; Britain her Sir Eric Geddes, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Admiral Sir R. E. Wemyss, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, and Italy her Admiral Thaon di Rival and her Rear Admiral Grassi. General Belin had now become the French Permanent Military Representative, General Sackville-West the British and General di Robilant the Italian. It took two foolscap pages for all the names including those of lesser rank. The United

States had one black coat, Frazier, who was still serving in place of Colonel House as civil representative. His part was strictly that of a listener.

Hopefully, the secretaries had all the names right, including the Honorables as distinguished from the Right Honorables, and the strings of titles of capital letters after the British to denote the orders they had received. Professor P. J. Mantoux continued in his part as interpreter. Clemenceau called the meeting to order in the Hotel Trianon, the while all whose imagination was not dead might wonder if they would ever hold another session at Versailles. The next might be in Havre or London while a Kaiser William II, in place of a Kaiser Wilhelm I, a Bethmann-Hollweg in place of Bismarck and a Hindenburg in the place of von Moltke, might be making themselves at home in the palace of Louis XIV and German spurs jingling in the Hall of Mirrors.

The session in London before the first German offensive had been gloomy enough, but this one had proximity to the battlefields and the added weight of three costly offensives with the third not over yet. The only Allied offensive in the meantime had been the American First Division's local and highly successful and skilful operation in the taking of Cantigny. Now the heads of the Allied nations met within the sound of the advancing German guns. Colonel William B. Wallace of Bliss' staff recalls, when he returned from the front, the tense suspense of the groups standing in front of the Trianon as they inquired if he had any news and their thrill when he told them he had seen units of the American Second Division hastening toward Château-Thierry.

"Even in this crisis, the Supreme War Council was able to discuss general subjects and policies for the future—indeed, the successful German drive was not specifically mentioned—and the Italian representatives were able to fight the proposal for unity of command and a unified combined fleet in the Adriatic with their old-time fervor and for the same old reasons, while the British representatives were expending much energy in trying to get the Siberian expedition launched."¹

Civil and military heads of the old European families had the attitude of those in a house of prayer and grievous illness when the

¹ Bliss' comment in the American Minutes.

members, suppressing their alarm, automatically go about their routine as a relief from their suspense. One wonders why, in their published reminiscences, the men who afterward had the credit of being the leaders of victory overlook the emotions at this time. Anyhow, it is interesting to know what the statesmen and soldiers talked about in this session, thus including a little history with biography about that mysterious Supreme War Council.

Clemenceau called for the initial item on the Agenda, the "re-examination of the naval situation in the Mediterranean." Reports from chaotic Russia, the source of so many tales since the Bolshevik revolution, had it that the Germans were to take over the Russian Black Sea Fleet and, with the good wishes of their Allies, the Turks, pass the Dardanelles. The French and British wanted the Italians to send battleships to join the French Mediterranean fleet in preparation to meet the Turco-Russo-German fleet.

The Italian admiral saw no reason for this; the British and French ministers of marine and Admirals Wemyss and le Bon pressed him with many reasons. Rival said that by the pact under which Italy agreed to enter the war the British and French had obligated themselves to give Italy their naval support until the Austrian battleships were destroyed or the conclusion of peace. Now the Allies were asking the naval assistance of Italy. Admiral le Bon and Admiral Wemyss agreed that all of di Rival's objections were of a secondary order; that Italy was stronger than Austria on the sea and would not have to fight Austria singlehanded. Rival said the Italian fleet would never serve under the French, accepting their command, tactics and fire control. He had a low opinion of the French navy and the British had broken faith.

"The discussion had grown quite acrimonious," said Bliss. Since the technical experts could not agree, Clemenceau concluded they better adjourn so the heads of the governments could consider the matter, between now and the tomorrow afternoon's meeting, June 2.

That evening Bliss wrote in a postscript to his letter of June 1, "just informed that the French government is packing up its papers to preparing for possible removal from Paris." The population had begun leaving Paris. Although the subject was not mentioned at the session, the one uppermost thought in every mind was the situation at the front. It looked better in the night's communiqué—as though

the German attack was exhausting itself. But in the morning it was renewed.

As soon as the next meeting opened—and by this time the Germans were already in the northern edge of Château-Thierry—Orlando said he wanted to challenge the decision of the heads of the governments at their conference. He asked that they take up the naval question again with their naval chiefs present. So the soldiers retired and left the statesmen and the sailors to their arguments. These had been proceeding for some time when Sir Henry Wilson asked Bliss:

“How are they getting on in there?”

“Still all at sea except the Italian Navy,” Bliss replied.¹

This was a delightful morsel for Wilson, who proceeded to pass it on. Bliss’ sense of humor had been caught off guard. He sent out a word of caution lest his remark should reach the Italians and prejudice his good relations with them when good relations with all the Allies were so essential to his part as a unifier whose only interest was to win the war.

However, no cozening, no baiting, no storming would lead Orlando to agree to fight the Turco-German-Russian fleet. Italy had only five battleships, he said, and she proposed to keep them safe in harbor as long as one Austrian battleship was afloat and there was no better evidence than that now being shown on the Marne that the Allies would be victorious.

There might be no unity of naval command in the Mediterranean, but there was for the armies on the Allied front in the person of Foch. It seemed to be high time for the swift combinations of the Napoleonic tradition, of which it was hoped that he would prove himself the master in the modern sense. He might not be blamed for the fact—but there was the fact—that General Franchet d’Esperey, in command of the Aisne sector, had neglected aerial scouting and had allowed thirty enemy divisions with all their artillery and trains to form unseen and unheard on his front.

The British could point to this as in keeping with the repeated errors of the boastful French staff since their initial mobilization of the French army east of Rheims in August, 1914, at the cost of an enemy foothold deep in northern France. If there had been unity

¹ Colonel U. S. Grant 3d to the author.

of command before 1917 probably such a repulse as that on the Aisne would have ended it. The March crisis had compelled it and the present crisis compelled its retention. There must be one mind in charge, and Foch's was the chosen mind.

Clemenceau, as usual, would see for himself. The battle ground was near; a swift automobile bore him quickly to the front. He had heard Generals Pétain, Degoutte and Duchesne, in distress for want of reserves, complain against Foch's error in sending troops north where he thought the next attack would come. Then Clemenceau returned to Paris to face panic in the Chamber of Deputies. But Foch was his man, the Frenchman. To counteract the scepticism he sent a telegram to the Allied governments saying Foch was conducting the present campaign with consummate skill.¹ Foch said he had made his dispositions; he seemed to be unperturbed at the sessions and in private conversations, but it was the business of all the great political and military men to appear unperturbed, while each wondered if Foch were equal to the crisis.

It was Paris and not the English Channel which was threatened now. Neither Foch nor Clemenceau was relying upon Napoleonic genius for its defense, but rather upon Madame de Sévigné's maxim that "Fortune is always on the side of the largest battalions." Clemenceau's bitterness because all the troops we had sent over for training with the Allies had been assigned to the British had its edge sharpened by the Aisne disaster. To support his appeals to the President through Ambassador Jusserand he had already sent a special emissary to Washington.²

Far away was the day before the war when the French staff thought that a small body of British troops in *liaison* with their own might be acceptable, but the French and Russian armies could defeat the Germans without further aid. Since then Britain and the British commonwealths had fed three millions of men into France and lost five hundred thousand dead.

When this Sixth Session of the Supreme War Council met, with the Germans threatening Paris, the 200,000 American troops brought over in May had raised the total of American forces in France to 722,000.³ But this was not enough. Indeed, in the course of that

¹ *Grandeur and Misery of Victory*. Clemenceau. p. 54.

² *Ibid.* pp. 70-71.

³ *The War with Germany*. Ayres. p. 15.

session, Clemenceau remarked that he had been greatly disappointed in the Americans. To this Bliss, the unifier, made no answer except possibly a look which was often more significant than words in checking the extravagances of statement of emotion, pique, special pleading or poor digestion. His part was not to add to the wrangling at the expense of further delays, but to prevent it.

So Clemenceau came to the great business of the session, without reference in the Council sessions to the present crisis, but with very definite interest in the policy of assigning future American reinforcements. This was not a question for Bliss but for Pershing, which was threshed out in a long and heated discussion between Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Milner, Pershing and Foch.¹ In the course of it Foch showed himself more aware as a soldier under pressure than Clemenceau of the folly of infiltrating American units into the French army. The conclusion on which Foch, Milner and Pershing united in a cablegram to Washington was that at least 250,000 American troops were to be sent over in both June and July and to be at Pershing's disposition for training.

Orlando might not want to part with his battleships to risk them against the Turko-German-Russian fleet, but he joined gladly with Lloyd George and Clemenceau in a cablegram to President Wilson to hurry American soldiers to meet the German army.

"General Foch has presented to us a statement of the utmost gravity, which points out that the numerical superiority of the enemy in France, where 162 Allied divisions now oppose 200 German divisions is very heavy, and that as there is no possibility of the British and French increasing the number of their divisions (on the contrary, they are put to extreme straits to keep them up) there is a great danger of the war being lost unless the numerical inferiority of the Allies can be remedied as rapidly as possible by the advent of American troops."

Foch wanted machine gunners and infantry to make up for the shortage of men. He placed the total American force required for this "at no less than 100 divisions, and urged the continuous raising of fresh American levies, which, in his opinion, should not be less than 300,000 a month, with a view to establishing an American force of 100 divisions at as early a date as possibly can be done."

One hundred of the big American divisions, including the person-

¹ *My Experiences in the World War*. Pershing, II, 77-78.

nel for the services of transport and supply, would make a total of 4,000,000 men, as a draft on the manhood from Maine to California across the Atlantic when the British had only two millions across the English Channel. The Prime Ministers were "satisfied that General Foch, who is conducting the present campaign with consummate ability, and on whose military judgment we continue to place the most absolute reliance, is not overestimating the needs of the case. . . ."

Surely history must conclude that the call for 4,000,000 Americans was a most humiliating military confession of the failure of the fumbling policy of a coalition in which Great Britain and France, with combined populations of over eighty millions, supported by the resources of the whole world, were held in stalemate by Germany with seventy millions, which had also fought the Russians, the Serbians, Rumanians and Italians, but which had unity of command from the first. It is strange that Allied memories should be dulled to this fact as though it was a reflection on the courage of their manhood which was so fully equal to the German, and which was sacrificed to inter-Allied squabbling. The reminiscences of the leaders have an excuse for forgetfulness but the survivors of the trenches and the relatives of the dead have a reason for everlasting recollection. Foch's statement of the relative strength of the Allies and enemy forces was exaggerated.

We were expected to send into battle against that German army, which Foch regarded as so formidable, troops with only a brief introductory camp experience at home in spite of Haig's and Pétain's insistence three months before that they must have a long period of training in France. The "but we consider the present emergency is such as to justify a temporary and exceptional departure by the United States from sound principles of training, especially as a similar course is being followed by France and Great Britain" of the Foch-Milner-Pershing cablegram was another misstatement for propagandic purposes. Raw French recruits were fed as individuals into veteran French ranks, raw British into veteran British ranks, while the most ardent Allied advocate of American infiltration had not proposed that our men should be fed in in smaller units than battalions into the armies of our Allies.

Having come to a conclusion about American reinforcements the commanders-in-chief and chiefs of staff departed and the Military Representatives were left with the statesmen to look after unfinished business while they had the news that Château-Thierry had fallen and thence the Germans were swinging westward toward Paris. The value of the Supreme War Council as a forum which brought all the political and military and dissentients together into frank discussion and sifted the wheat out of the chaff had been proven again in the crisis of the third offensive.

Unity of military command had been previously achieved but not coördination for the supply of the armies, which had become the more vital in view of the immense American troop program. As far back as January 28, 1918, Oscar Crosby, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, had written to Bliss saying that the huge loans we had floated at home and the enormous cost of our own military operations required that no further loans be made to the Allies "unless it could be demonstrated that the high purposes of the war were to be served thereby." Bliss continued to press for the pooling of Allied supplies which he had stressed in his report to Baker of December 18, 1917. At last this was approximately achieved. At this session of the Council a board representing all the armies was established "for the unification of supplies and utilities." The pooling of ships had also been achieved in large measure.

Another source of recruits now had attention. Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Balfour and Orlando had a long discussion about bringing the Czech soldiers, who had been Russian prisoners of war and were now gathering in Vladivostok, across Canada to the western front. Lloyd George said their transport would mean so many fewer Americans and Canadians in France. Orlando said the Czechs were good fighters; the Italians who had fought them could testify they were. Clemenceau made the point they were battle-trained veterans while the Americans were not; and he had most definite information that once their movement was known there would be an uprising in Prague much more formidable than the last one. The objection that China had been promised the use of the ships to take German internes to Australia, and this might offend her as an Ally, was brushed aside. China had not proved to be of much value as an Ally. It was decided

to bring the Czechs with any ships available. Meanwhile, no one was certain how many Czechs there were in Vladivostok.

As for recruiting man-power for the Allies in Abyssinia, information was very vague on the subject; and this better be referred to the Military Representatives for further study. Then the question of oats came up for the extended attention which it warranted. There would be a shortage of 284,000 tons of oats for the numerous animals of the armies in France for 1918. But the British and French experts could not agree on a standard limited ration, and further investigation of means of coördination was left to the Military Representatives.

Holland reappeared in the councils, and most urgently. At the special diplomatic meeting in London, March 15, 1918, at the time the Supreme Council met there, the question of the requisitioning of Dutch ships had been argued. Lord Robert Cecil, in charge of the blockade, had said he was certain this would not bring Holland into the war on Germany's side since that would endanger her rich colony of Java. The Allies stretched international law and took over the ships, and Holland remained neutral.

The new question was whether, in view of the German industrial exactions on Holland, the Allies should follow a policy which would bring her into the war on their side. After a long controversy the silent Bliss had something to say. The action the Allies proposed would certainly become known to Germany, he said. If it resulted in a declaration of war by Germany, "it would open to question both the good faith and the military strength of the Allies. Germany was on the Dutch borders, she could strike at Holland at once with her army; the Allies could not go to Holland's immediate assistance."

A moral issue was involved, one too potent to be the pawn of the compromises of military necessity with laws and ethical standards. The Allies accepted Bliss' counsel; the Allies would not secretly try to get Holland into war and leave her to be overrun by the enemy.¹

Listening and learning, Bliss was storing up more knowledge of the ways of men and nations as his own country, which had repudi-

¹ Resolution No. 8 on Joint Note 27, Sixth Session of the Supreme War Council, June 3, 1918.



MRS. TASKER H. BLISS

ated its pre-war contentions against the blockade, was drawn deeper into the vise of war.

"It is the unhappy fact that the rules made to govern the parties in one war result in large part from the violations of the rules made for a previous one made under different conditions. When this war began the use of noxious gases was contrary to the rules. One side violated the rule and began to use it; then the other side used it; and now all the world contemplates its use in a future war. And so the modern blockade which grew out of a gradual violation of rules made for guidance in wars of a different character has doubtless come to stay for future wars, so far as the circumstances of the moment will permit it to be applied. . . .

"In these days of war between nations in arms it is not possible for any of them, even one with the most varied and abundant resources, to store up in peace the supplies necessary for an enormous and continued demand in war. There is always something that must be obtained abroad. . . . And the character of this latest and, probably, of future wars, justifies the extreme blockade. It will make, and it is hoped that it will make, future wars more difficult in their inception because, unless the whole world accepts this new rule, it will require a nation or an alliance strong enough to defy the rest of the world in order to block all avenues of commercial access to the nation with which it is at war. But it will do it if it can. . . .

"From 1914 to 1918 the principle of this blockade involved the shutting off of the Central Powers from everything coming from the outside—food, clothing, fuel, material for munitions, everything. It was justified and necessary because the war in its actual effect was against the nations, against every man, woman and child in them and not merely against the armies in the field. . . . Everyone was drafted; the labor of some at the front, the labor of others at the rear in order to enable the former to stay at the front. Horrible as we may think it, all these have been treated in this war as soldiers with little distinction, and it is feared that it will be as bad or worse in the next war, unless the good God gives us the sense at least to try some plan by which another such war is made impossible. . . ." ¹

With 250,000 Americans a month being transported to Europe to fight in this "latest war," Bliss saw his duty to do his part to win it and save as many of their lives as he could; but no man ever felt more deeply or understood more clearly the cause of making this really "the war to end war."

¹ Bliss' final official report to the Secretary of State, February 6, 1920.

One of the subjects for which we were fighting was the self-determination of peoples, as voiced by President Wilson. "So the Allied governments at this session desire to associate themselves in an expression of earnest sympathy for the nationalistic aspirations of the Czecho-Slovak and Yugo-Slav peoples,"—thus giving them a fighting cause against the common enemy and gratifying President Wilson, the commander of the immense American recruiting station. With Russia, which had been sovereign over part of Poland, now out of the war, the statesmen could go further, with a promise which was to crystallize its fulfillment in the Danzig Corridor:

"The creation of a united and independent Poland with free access to the sea constitutes one of the conditions of a solid and just peace, and of the rule of right in Europe."

The statesmen adjourned after working out a statement for the press that the measures taken at the Council's session assured the Allied peoples of victory and that the reserves of the Allies could not be exhausted, owing to the immense aid now coming from the United States.¹

Clemenceau returned to face the French Chamber of Deputies with his "I will fight in front of Paris; I will fight in Paris; I will fight behind Paris." On the same day, June 4, Baker received Pershing's cable of the previous day: "Consider military situation very grave. . . . The attitude of the Supreme War Council which has been in session since Saturday is one of extreme depression. . . ." ²

The unity of command for which Bliss had labored came to a decisive test. At this session he had seen the seal put upon its corollary, the pooling of supplies, and thrown the weight of his influence in favor of peace in Holland.

¹ Resolution No. 12. Supreme War Council, Sixth Session.

² Cablegram No. 1235, S-A.E.F.

XXVII

PROUD DAYS FOR HIM

"WE have been passing through exciting times," Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss June 8, 1918. "It seems strange to walk in the quiet and peace of my garden, watch the stars twinkling through the elms and the birch trees and at the same time hear the dull booming of the cannonade to the eastwards, showing how near the war is to Paris. But you must not worry. Our plans are all made in case we should have to leave and in that event we will probably go to Tours. A few days more will probably decide. My days pass in a more or less routine manner. Conferences and office work. Walks in the Château gardens. Dinner and not long after to bed. Better letter in a day or two."

The exciting times which were over referred to the third offensive. Clemenceau's gallant words in the Chamber of Deputies, June 4, were spoken after it had been halted. A unit of the American Third Division had had its baptism of fire in the streets of Château-Thierry and then held the bridge-head on the south bank. Foch had mustered reserves at Torcy to resist further advance in that direction on Paris; and the fresh American Second Division marched past the French in retreat to its stand on the Paris road. Then Harbord with the Marine brigade of the Second had counter-attacked and recovered Bouresches and a part of Belleau Wood. The American Third captured Hill 204 opposite Château-Thierry. Providentially, when Providence so far had not been very kind to Pershing in his ordeal, the third German offensive had broken near his own sector and in touch with his own line of communications, thus averting the formidable complication of supplying his army in the congested area of the first and second offensives in northwestern France.

The third offensive had taken 55,000 prisoners and 650 guns.¹ So easy had been the advance to the southward, past the resistance at Rheims and toward Paris, that it had overrun Ludendorff's objec-

¹ *A History of the Great War*. Buchan. IV, 258.

tive.¹ His gains and booty had been enormous, he had cut the Paris-Chalons railroad; but he was left with a huge balloon-like salient. Previous plans and present opportunity directed his next move to the west of the salient toward Paris. It was the guns of this the fourth offensive which Bliss mentioned at the start of this chapter in his letter of June 8 to Mrs. Bliss. He wrote to her June 14:

"I will let you know in case we should ever change our headquarters. A few days ago we thought we should have to do so. But the German drive seems again to have been checked. . . . Everybody at General Foch's headquarters is now feeling very cheerful. The Americans are courted and praised. They all feel and say that it is we who are to win the war."

Foch had not been caught napping by the fourth offensive. Whether or not Foch was the military genius his admirers credited him with being, a single mind in command had reserves of French ready in time. The reference to how Americans were courted and praised had its concrete origin in the unyielding hand-to-hand persistence of Harbord's command in establishing mastery over the enemy in Belleau Wood, while the word spread that other American divisions were concentrating on the Marne salient. Bliss no longer met in the glances of his Allied colleagues the thought of their eagerness in hours of gloom: "But when are you going to begin fighting?" His counsel of patience, the influence of our potential power behind him as the legate of unity had now been materialized by Pershing in aggressive martial power.

"Everybody is pretty cheerful, and the feeling of satisfaction increases with the news of the debarkation of every fresh American contingent. . . . The conduct of the Second Division was superb. The French have been wildly enthusiastic about it, and deservedly so. General Foch has in conversation with me at his headquarters expressed his admiration on several occasions for the work of this division, in a way that justifies my belief that he was convinced at the time that our Second Division practically saved Paris, and that is the impression which Colonel Wells has received from French officers at the front, as well as from the staff of General Foch, with which he is constantly associated. It occurred to me that it was time for us to begin preparing our facts for future history. A year from now the disposition of the French may be to minimize

¹ *Ludendorff's Own Story*. II, 268.

the work of this division and I therefore had Colonel Wells prepare the statement which I enclose, in order that I might endorse it so that our records would show, in the future, exactly what was the sentiment of the French at the time of the action.¹

"I took lunch on last Sunday with M. Dupuy, the owner and editor of the *Petit Parisien*. At the lunch were present a dozen French gentlemen, for the most part newspaper men, who spoke with the most perfect frankness to the effect that the withdrawal of the French after the German attack of May 27 was nothing less than a disorderly rout and that the prevention of a great disaster was due solely to the timely arrival and splendid work of the American troops. In fact, if you will note the distance passed over in the time that elapsed between the first breaking of the French line and the arrival of the Germans at Château-Thierry, you will see that the Germans could not have proceeded more rapidly if it had been a peace maneuver.

"Everything that our troops have done since they have been actually on the battle-fronts, convinces me that both the English and the French entirely misjudged the time necessary to train our men to play their proper part on the front line. They did not give us credit, nor did we ourselves take the credit that we ought to have taken, for the intelligence and enthusiasm, and splendid physique and morale of the American troops.

"I may say, in passing, that at lunch a few days ago at the British Ambassador's (Lord Derby), M. Briand spoke in terms of great severity of the French failure to make any efforts to get information of what was going on among the Germans along their front before May 27. He said that he knew it to be a fact that no airplane photographs had been taken for two months and that for a month prior to the beginning of the drive there had been no airplane observation at all. I repeated this today to General Sackville-West in my office and he said that this failure of the French to properly conduct their airplane observation service was a constant source of complaint and criticism by the British. There is a good deal of talk just now of a possible attack of the Germans from Alsace somewhere in the direction of Belfort. The British are criticizing the French for their total lack of airplane observation to determine what may be going on in the German back-country along this part of their line.

"However, this mutual criticism is easy and constant between the French and the British. I remember reading many years ago the memoirs of an English lady of the nobility, who describes an incident at her house in Brussels just before the battle of Waterloo. The Duke of Wellington was present and there received from the hands of a messenger who came riding post-haste a dispatch announcing the defeat of the Germans under Blücher by Napoleon on June 16, 1815, two days before the

¹ Colonel B. H. Wells of Bliss' Staff.

battle of Waterloo. She says that the Duke of Wellington, on reading the dispatch, slapped his thigh and, chuckling as though it were a great joke said, 'Old Blücher has been well licked and I am d— glad of it!' When the English disaster commencing March 21 last, began, the French shrugged their shoulders and said that it showed English inefficiency and lack of discipline and poor general staff work, etc., etc. When the French gave way after May 27, the English shrugged their shoulders and said that it showed French inefficiency, lack of it, etc., etc. I am glad to say that one thing they seem quite agreed on is admiration for the American troops."¹

Every word in praise of the Americans was the sweeter morsel to Bliss because of his isolation from the front; and the recording of it in keeping with his prevision of how soon our aid would be forgotten, as it was to be. However, he did get to the front occasionally. He records another tribute he learned at Rawlinson's headquarters on a visit to the British army.

"General Rawlinson had planned to make an attack (on not a large scale) on a part of his sector northeast of Amiens. It was in this sector that the troops of the 33d Division (Bell's) were taking their second period of training. The front of this part of the sector was held by Australian troops with whom ours were training. A battalion of our troops was scattered by companies along the front of attack in the front line, and in the second line along with the British troops were six more of our companies. All of these men of ours were most anxious to go in but it seems that it was held by higher authority that their training had not progressed far enough to warrant this and an order was sent directing that they be withdrawn from the attacking troops. General Rawlinson told me that he was able to withdraw the six companies that were in the reserve but that the four companies in the front line could not be withdrawn without making his operation impossible, and that it was too late to pull them out. They, therefore, took part in the attack where, it seems, they did really better than anyone else. General Rawlinson said that when he gave the order to withdraw the six companies that were in the reserve there were men who actually cried with rage and disappointment. It seems that a good many of them exchanged clothing with the Australian soldiers and went into the fight without being recognized as Americans. I fancy that they were recognized all right but that the arrangement was quietly winked at by the local officers, but nothing was known of it at the higher headquarters until the list of casualties was scanned, when the fact was discovered. In fact, everything that I heard during the entire trip confirmed what I have

¹ Letter to Baker, June 14, 1918.

often said, that neither the British nor the French had any conception of the aptitude and intelligence of our men."

Not only the 250,000 the prime ministers and the generals had asked for, but an additional 50,000 Americans arrived in June, making a total, in honor of July 4, of the million which Pershing had set as the goal in his original plan for the midsummer of 1918. On July 4 Bliss said in an address to the American Chamber of Commerce in Paris:

"From the coast of California and Oregon to the battle-front in France is a distance of not far from 7,000 miles. The history of war, which is the history of the world, shows no parallel to this coming of an army, already a million men, for a death grapple with an ancient race separated from our country by so many thousands of miles of sea and land. And, so, I ask myself again the question—'Why has this million youth come with songs upon their lips to die out here, taking their transfer from the living army to swell the constantly increasing ranks of that army of immortal dead?' And why do they and we think their death so well-won? It sounds trite to say that it is all because of an ideal. But, so often as the question is asked, that alone must be the answer."

At home our people were on rations, tightening their belts, denying themselves luxuries to produce war's necessities, making the idleness of man or woman treasonable, drafting new levies to the camps to fill the places of outgoing divisions as we gave all strength and will to keep up the flow of men and material overseas, with General Peyton C. March, the Chief of Staff, applying whip and spur in ruthless concentration of purpose. "America became the deciding factor in the war," said Ludendorff. Our troops had arrived more rapidly and in larger numbers than he thought possible.¹ It was now a race against time for him for a favorable decision, with the odds in numbers already against him.

¹ *Ludendorff's Own Story*. Ludendorff. II, 276. Also *Out of My Life*. Hindenburg. p. 386.

XXVIII

AGAINST TANGENT ADVENTURES

As a soldier Bliss realized that easy short cuts to success were as rare in his as any other trade. He was a bulwark against wasteful tangent adventures which mesmerized amateur strategists who thought of armies as groups of sprinters unencumbered by artillery and supply trains.

"The easterners and westerners are hard at it," he wrote, early in his service on the Supreme War Council, to Baker. With Pershing, March, Foch, Haig and Pétain he held that the war must be won on the western front in keeping with military principles which were sometimes harassing to the statesmen.

It may be as much of a mistake for statesmen to think they are generals as for the generals to think they are statesmen. Lloyd George, who had Napoleonic conceptions and regarded generals as frequently stupid, was conspicuous among the easterners who not only favored Allenby's Palestine expedition against the Turks but a flanking movement with a great Allied army from a base at Salonika or elsewhere on the Mediterranean against the Central Powers. Clemenceau, who had been an earnest student of military science, but who was no less irritated by what appeared to him the limitations of conventional military minds, was more inclined to the western view. Beat the enemy in his France and the enemy was out of his France.

The fault of Lloyd George's amazingly brilliant mentality, as it applied to military affairs, sprang from his quick shifts as a politician to meet emergencies, which had a likeness to the alacrity of movement, the ruses and the swift strokes in pitched battle days on small fields, as visible to the commander as the gridiron to a football coach. These, he assumed, might be applicable in the World War with its immense armies and gigantic masses of supplies over long fronts tied to ships, railroads and highways in which a commander must choose a line of action and hammer it out on that line as Grant did from the Wilderness to Appomattox.

The easterners, who were to have disciples in the post-war "if" school, thought it absurd to keep up attacks with huge numbers against a solid trench line from Switzerland to the Flanders coast when the Allies might move inland from a Mediterranean base against an eastern front which was weakly held. There the enemy could be struck in flank when there was no room for a flanking operation on the western front. And had not all great classic battles been won by the flank? This plan might even allow a surprise on the flank. And was not a surprise by the flank, rolling back an enemy's wing, the very consummation of strategy?

But this bold conception overlooked the old formula of the interior line, and more than that. Meade had the interior line on a three-mile front the second day at Gettysburg when Lee's army was bent around Culp's Hill and trying for Little Round Top. Joffre had it on a front of two hundred and fifty miles between von Kluck on the German right wing and the Bavarians on the German left in the Battle of the Marne.

The interior line's strategic value could have been simply illustrated to Lloyd George if he had looked at his dinner plate and imagined an army on the offensive with its wings advancing along either rim. Once its wings have passed the point midway of the plate, its communications and troops in reserve have to cover the longer distance the farther the wings advance beyond the center, and the interior line's the shorter. If the wings get far enough to envelop the enemy, cutting his lines of supply, threatening his retreat, the enemy has to go or run the risk of being surrounded as the French were at Sedan in the Franco-Prussian War and as they might have been in 1914 in the World War if von Kluck could have swung well past Paris and the Bavarians could have broken through the Mirecourt Gap.

Except for the frontiers of Rumania, Holland, Denmark and Switzerland, the Allies, with Russia's long front, already had the Germans enveloped by land in the first three years of the war while the North and Baltic seas were blockaded. When Rumania entered the war the land encirclement except for the three neutral countries was complete. But Rumania, with Russia still in the war, was so far from successful in her offensive that the Mackensen drive deprived her of all but a sliver of her own country. Now it was pro-

posed, after Russia was out of the war, to effect an eastern flanking movement without Russian aid.

The Germans had the shorter distances of an interior line and a network of railroads. They had been able to move a corps from the western front to the eastern before Russia could move one from one end of her line to the other. They would have even more advantage against a large Allied army which had to be transported from the western front by ships through the Mediterranean to a coast with utterly inadequate port facilities, and then advanced in a land with a few poor roads and slender railroad facilities.

The Germans' secret service would have promptly informed them of the departure of such an expedition and when and where its units landed. While the Allied flanking expedition was getting ashore and started overland, they would have the numerical superiority for a decisive blow on the western front and the time to prepare a trench line in a chosen strategic position to face the flanking Allied army. The situation would have been similar to that if Lee, with the exterior line, had had to move Pickett's men around by the way of Richmond before he could get them in action on the third day at Gettysburg, or Sherman's army had had to go by way of California and the Gulf of Mexico before it started on the "march to the sea."

General E. H. H. Allenby's Palestine expedition was against the Turks in open country and not against the armies of the Central Powers. It was a distant operation of the same sort as though the Federals had sent a force to Arizona in 1863, but most useful and approved by Haig, while that to Arizona would have been lunatic. Yet the highly romantic and appealing Palestine expedition has been held up as a what-might-have-been example of the success of a large expedition across the Mediterranean against armies of the Central Powers.

However, if the military leaders and advisers of the Allies had united in recommending that an army of a million be withdrawn from France to attack through Salonika, we can imagine Lloyd George saying, "Leave the English Channel undefended! Have you gone mad? Do you think I'd dare stand for that in the Commons?" and Clemenceau saying, "Not from my France except over my dead body."

This primer elucidation of Allied strategy in the World War is given in place of what was so obvious to the trained military mind. The westerners held that it was a war of attrition to be fought out on the western front, when one side or the other in exhaustion could not bear further blows and would collapse, which is what happened. Haig never deviated from this conviction and as early as 1915 stated his belief that the collapse on the western front might come suddenly.¹ And so it did. When it came, then that of the outlying areas of resistance would follow, as it did.

The American plan was entirely and resolutely western, its spearhead Pershing's sector in Lorraine. Much of Bliss' time was occupied in resisting proposals which might alienate our energies. The most fantastic of them and historically the most puzzling, which further requires that history be mixed with biography, was the expeditions to northern Russia and to Siberia. Two decades later they seemed as absurd as trying to win the war at the North Pole instead of on the Rhine. The agitation which led to these expeditions began soon after the Bolsheviks overthrew the Kerensky régime in Russia. No social and political effect of the war had been so appalling as that a little group of proscribed communist exiles had taken over the government of that enormous autocracy. They had made peace with Germany; their gospel was the spread of communism throughout the world.

Kerensky himself, as well as his followers and those of high estate in the Czar's day, who had escaped with their lives, appeared in Europe and numbers of these exiles moved on to Washington. They brought tales of unspeakable chaos and horror, of the readiness of the sane and loyal to rally against this bloody minority rule which released bands of mutinous Russian soldiers to murder and violence. Czech soldiers and prisoners in Russia proper and those loyal to the old régime were reported to be trying to form groups of resistance; and it was represented that they needed only Allied support to save their own country from anarchy and to carry on the war against the Central Powers. Thousands of Czech refugee veterans were said to be in Siberia asking for relief.

Even under the Czar the Allies had combined in aid to flagging Russia. The Kerensky revolution, which Americans hailed as es-

¹ To the author.

tablishing Russia as a democracy, had been an influence in bringing America into the war and led to our sending the Root Mission to Russia and to our support in funds and material and the dispatch of a mission of experts to reorganize Russian transport.

The Allies had various estimates of the number of German prisoners in Russia who would be released for the western front. Moreover, it was feared that Germany would recruit Russian veterans into her army. With Lenin and Trotsky reported ready to play into German hands, with the Germany army advancing into the Ukraine, the stringent Allied blockade of Germany would be offset now that the Central Powers might have the granary of Russia at their disposition. At Archangel in northern Russia, there were over 1,000,000 tons of coal and stores which had been paid for with American money and which would probably fall into German hands, including 14,000 tons of copper of which Germany was grievously short. Also at Vladivostok there were 600,000 tons of stores.

It was in desperate mood that the Allies looked toward Russia at the meeting of the Supreme War Council in London, March 15, 1918, under the shadow of the first German offensive, six days before it came. Great Britain had an especial interest in her apprehension over the reports of the spread of Bolshevik propaganda toward the borders of India.

Thought turned toward Ally Japan across the narrow sea from Siberia. Already the Military Representatives had passed a resolution favoring her temporary occupation of Vladivostok for recovery of the stores there under the advice of an Allied mission to which she must give guarantees.¹ Bliss had signed this, subject to approval of his government, but protesting that America would send no troops to Siberia, and the operation should be limited to the recovery of the stores and the rescue of the Czechs.

When he reached London he received this cablegram from Frank L. Polk, Acting Secretary of State:

"I have read to the Ambassadors of Great Britain, France and Italy the following communication which I am telegraphing to the Ambassador at Tokyo to read to the Japanese Foreign Minister and which I repeat for your information and guidance:

"The government of the United States has been giving the most care-

¹ Joint Note No. 16, February 9, 1918.

ful and anxious consideration to the conditions now prevailing in Siberia and their possible remedy. It realizes the extreme danger of anarchy to which the Siberian provinces are exposed and the imminent risk also of German invasion and domination. It shares with the Governments of the Entente the view that if intervention is deemed wise the Government of Japan is in the best situation to undertake it and could accomplish it most efficiently.'

"It has, moreover, the utmost confidence in the Japanese Government and would be entirely willing, so far as its own feelings toward that Government are concerned, to entrust the enterprise to it, but it is bound in frankness to say that the wisdom of intervention seems to it most questionable. If it were undertaken the Government of the United States assumes that the most explicit assurances would be given that it was undertaken by Japan as an ally of Russia in Russia's interest and with the sole view of holding it safe against Germany and at the absolute disposal of the final peace conference. Otherwise the Central Powers could and would make it appear that Japan was doing in the East exactly what Germany is doing in the West, and so seek to counter the condemnation which all the world must pronounce against Germany's invasion of Russia which she attempts to justify on the pretext of restoring order.

"And it is the judgment of the Government of the United States, uttered with the utmost respect, that even with such assurances given, they could in the same way be discredited by those whose interests it was to discredit them, that a hot resentment would be generated in Russia itself and that the whole action might play into the hands of the enemies of Russia and particularly of the enemies of the Russian Revolution, for which the Government of the United States entertains the gravest sympathy, in spite of all the unhappiness and misfortune which has for the time being sprung out of it. The Government of the United States begs once more to express to the Government of Japan its warmest friendship and confidence and once more begs it to accept these expressions of judgment as uttered only in the frankness of friendship.'"¹

The prime ministers of Great Britain, France and Italy decided at the Supreme War Council meeting to refer the Russian question to a special diplomatic session at which Bliss was not present, but Mr. Frazier represented the State Department with his customary attentive diplomatic silence as a veteran career man, which was his rôle since President Wilson had asked that he be permitted to be present in order to listen. A very favorable position for him,

¹ Through the American Embassy, London. No. 6774, March 5, 1918.

remarked Clemenceau, who was in testy mood over what seemed to him the President's doctrinaire inclination to refer to the United States as an Associate and not an Ally in the war against the Central Powers.¹

"M. Clemenceau pointed out that before the United States of America entered the war, the Governments of Great Britain, France and Italy regarded themselves as the Governments of the *Entente*. They were still the Governments of the *Entente*. They had not received one single word to suggest that President Wilson wanted to enter the *Entente*. We had won this title with our blood and money, and it is one that was worth retaining. He was aware that President Wilson had complained because, in a published declaration, politics had been spoken of. It was true that what was said was almost word for word what President Wilson had said before, but he was displeased when it was said on behalf of the Supreme War Council. He pointed out that the heads of the British, French and Italian Governments were the heads of the Supreme War Council, according to the constitution of Rapallo."

On the margin of these minutes Bliss wrote the following comment:

"This is one of those impulsive statements often made by Mr. C. The constitution of Rapallo was drawn up by the heads of these three governments, but when they urged the United States to become a party to it, the President entered with exactly the same rights and powers as the other heads of governments."

All manner of variant opinions were expressed in this conference. Balfour said Trotsky talked a great deal of wild nonsense and displayed dense ignorance, but when he saw how weak Russia was he might become more malleable and ask for Allied assistance. Balfour had heard that Allied intervention would turn the Russian bourgeoisie toward Germany, but he favored intervention.

All did if Wilson would consent. Lloyd George said the Japanese must not be treated as an inferior race, but as an Ally and not be asked for too many guarantees. His view was that they were making preparations for intervention; but other views were that they had not yet said they would agree to intervene.

Clemenceau said this was not a moment for discussion but for

¹ *Procès-Verbal* of the Allied Diplomatic Conference, March 15-16, 1918, printed for the Supreme War Council.

action. We should ask America what she would do if Japan wanted to act. President Wilson was fighting with us but wanted to have a free hand for his policy in Europe and Asia. In Europe this did not matter. In Asia it was a different thing. There was no time to waste—not a day. If President Wilson refused, we must act on our own responsibility.

Then the question was raised: How far would Japan agree to go? How large a force would she be willing to send? It would not be much use unless she went as far as Irkutsk.

The solution would have been most easy if America had agreed to join the Japanese in a march into Siberia; but there stood Bliss, and doubtless that stubborn Pershing, holding that an expedition to Siberia or Archangel was impracticable in a military sense and meanwhile, as Clemenceau had said already on previous occasions, America must win the war by sending over vast reinforcements to France.

This vacillating discussion, based on such conflicting information out of the vast maelstrom in the huge expanse of Russia, ended by directing the Military Representatives to make a study for an expedition to Archangel, and in an agreement to make a French and British appeal to the President about Siberia which, after some talk, it was decided should be separate rather than joint.

Balfour addressed the President in the name of the stricken Russian people:

“Her [Russia’s] territory swarms with hostile agencies; such energies as she still possesses are expended in internal conflicts; and no power of resistance is left her against German domination. Since Russia cannot help herself she must be helped by her friends. . . . It is, therefore, to Japan that, in the opinion of the Conference, appeal should be made to aid Russia in her present helpless condition.”

M. Clemenceau’s text spoke of “the strangest aberration in history” which would now subject Russia to the “will of the same Germany which for the last four years has been fighting against the independence of nations and against all mankind. . . . As this long war proceeds we see more and more clearly that the freedom of one is linked with the freedom of all; and without attempting to enumerate all future enfranchisements we need only appeal to the general redress which we expect from justice and which we call ‘Right.’ ”

In colloquial language both Balfour and Clemenceau had reason to think "That ought to get Wilson," in spite of American interest in the Open Door policy in the Far East.

The record of this conference has a peculiar interest in showing great leaders in an uncharted sea when the barometer indicated the approach of the mighty storm of the first German offensive of 1918. Meanwhile, Bliss was pressing for more shipping to get American troops to the western front and for the General Reserve to meet the crisis in the impending German offensive.

Already British cruisers had occupied the port of Murmansk in north Russia. The question was whether to dispatch a military force to Archangel to recover the Allied supplies there and advance into the interior to connect with the Czechs. The Military Representatives, thinking in military terms, could not follow the statesmen. Their report March 23, 1918, opposed any armed advance beyond the port, but that Murmansk should be held as long as possible. On June 3 they recommended sending a force of from four to six battalions.¹ This might include a battalion of American Marines, if our government would consent.

After the sixth session of the Supreme War Council, June 1-3, the pressure on the United States became more acute, pressure on Baker to influence the President, pressure on the President through the British and French Ambassadors in Washington, pressure on Bliss and Pershing whose influence was so important with Baker. In June the United States had exceeded its program in answer to Foch's appeal. Pershing now had his million men. In May we had drafted 373,000 to the training camps, in June 302,000 and we were calling out 401,000 in July, which brought the total of our youth withdrawn from civil employment, when industry was being strained to its utmost capacity for their support and our immense shipping, arms and munition programs, to more than three millions and a half.²

With access to so prolific and so willing a recruiting station, the champions of Russian intervention envisioned reserves enough for another great adventure. Although the fourth German offensive had been stopped and American divisions were concentrating against

¹ Joint Note Number 31.

² *The War with Germany*. Ayres. p. 15.

the Marne salient, the easterners were more than ever convinced that the only way to win the war was the restitution of the Russian front. They relied on reports that there were now anywhere from 100,000 to 300,000 Czechs who were waiting for Allied support to overwhelm Bolshevism and then form a line against the Germans. Hand in hand with this argument went the appeal to Allied loyalty not to allow the Czechs who were making their way to Vladivostok to be massacred by the Bolsheviks. Germany was said to be already recruiting Russians for her armies; to be already drawing on the great reserves of the Russian harvest in the Ukraine. Only time, from German sources, was to check this misstatement. General Hoffman in command on the German eastern front stated that the Germans, owing to sabotage and lack of lubricants, were able to run only two or three trains a day out of the Ukraine when transport of the harvests required 500 trains daily.¹

But early in June such illuminating facts were not included in the mass of information glutting Bliss' files. He wrote to Baker, June 4:

"British and French general staff bureaus and their ministries of foreign affairs give out nothing but that which is favorable to the idea of this intervention. All the papers that are submitted to me from these sources, to influence my action, are of this one-sided character; every formal discussion that takes place here and every formal document that is submitted, on the subject of the military aspect of such intervention, touch only upon its assumed advantages and make no reference to any possible disadvantage that might result therefrom. Then I make myself a sort of an *advocatus diaboli* and suggest conceivable disadvantages, merely for the purpose of assuring that the question will be fairly considered in all of its phases. I note a feeling of irritation. In other words, I have never seen or heard the question rationally discussed here, as though the parties to the discussion really wanted to get at all of the 'ins and outs' of it. I do not believe that the question can be considered in this unbiased light anywhere except in Washington."

Two weeks later he wrote:

"I find nothing from any source which can be regarded as giving the feeling among the great Russian peasant class. They have no way of expressing their sentiments and it is very likely that they have no well formed sentiment as yet on the subject. The great mass of them probably do not know that any such thing is in contemplation.

¹ Meeting of German Cabinet, Oct. 17, 1918. *Memoirs*, Max von Baden. II, 102.

"But, if intervention should actually come in the form of a great Japanese army moving westward through Siberia, I apprehend the result. They do not want to fight anyone; but the Germans, I fear, can easily make them believe that intervention coming from the East will simply mean widespread war all over Russia. They will soon realize that the Germans will not supinely wait for a Japanese army to arrive on the eastern border of Germany and that it will fight them long before they can reach that border. I fear that the European Russian peasant can easily be convinced that the only way to save his fields from devastation will be to join the Germans and meet the invasion before it can reach them.

"The whole question is this: Is it better for the Allies to take this chance with all of its possibilities of disastrous failure and with the chance that Germany will be ultimately strengthened in the West, rather than weakened; or, is it better not at this moment to give Germany the opportunity for propaganda among the Russian peasants and wait for the little time that will be necessary in order to enable the Americans to turn against Germany and thoroughly to defeat her, with which defeat will go the destruction of Germany's ambitions in the East."¹

Bliss, it will be recalled, had signed Joint Note 16 with reservations which provided for the occupation of the railroad from Harbin to Vladivostok—and limited to that at Bliss' suggestion—as a rallying point for the Czechs and to keep Allied stores out of the hands of the Bolsheviks. But since this the situation had changed and the new proposals for an adequate military invasion entailed a vast and costly enterprise.

"At that time [of the signing of Joint Note 16] the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was not fully agreed upon. . . . The present form of Russian government, so far as it is a government, had not developed. Bolshevik interests had not penetrated into Siberia. . . . All of Russia and Siberia was a chaotic mass of whirling atoms, like those in celestial nebulae, each seeking a point of rest where it could consolidate itself with others of its kind. . . .

"The fact of the matter is that the Russian people (from eighty to ninety percent are peasants) are sick of war, and apparently of all war. They do not want to fight anyone for anything. . . . What was one of the principal things, a century and more ago, which put the French Revolution on its feet and consolidated it against all Europe? Up to a certain point the French Revolution was a mad revel of brute force and what was called 'confiscation.' Many elements in the country were in-

¹ Letter to Brigadier General Dennis E. Nolan, Chief of G-2, G.H.Q., A.E.F., June 20, 1918.

different to the revolution or passively hostile to it. Up to that time, the government, naturally and necessarily, remained in the control of a class of men, many of whom represented the purely destructive elements of the community. But, when invasion came, these indifferent and passively hostile elements found that they disliked the invader more than they disliked the Revolution."

He mentioned the then policy of the Russian revolution for peasant ownership, which found ready acceptance in the minds of peasants "who had no title to the soil and to the huts in which they lived," and then continued:

"I doubt if more than a century ago all France would have sprung to arms at the cry of '*La patrie en danger*!' if, at that time, the soil of France had not passed into the hands of its peasants and they felt that it was really *their* country that was in danger and not that of a few absent landlords. . . .

"My colleagues here say that a great famine is impending in Russia [which of course contradicted the assumption that Germany would have an excess of Russian wheat at her disposition], and that the granaries of Siberia will constitute the only hope of relief. . . . If the Russians have to choose between fighting the Japanese and the Germans to secure bread it is quite as likely they will fight the former as the latter. . . .

"I have just been talking with a French officer who returned a week ago from Russia after a year's stay there with the French Mission. He bitterly denounces the British representative, Lockhart, the American representative, Robins, and the French representative, as being more Bolshevik than the Bolsheviks. He says they are misleading their governments in favor of the Bolsheviks. I do not know, because reports from these gentlemen do not come to us. . . . Everyone here seems to be imbued with a growing and bitter hatred of the Bolshevik government, and, I believe, would welcome its destruction. If you have any documents which show what is accepted in Washington as present Russian sentiment I wish you would send them to me." ¹

While British interest in the delivery of Russia from the Bolsheviks centered in safeguarding India and the French were hoping yet to salvage their enormous investment in Russian bonds under the Czar, both British and French felt that it was a world duty to prevent the spread of communism. When Bliss remarked to Lloyd George, its most ardent sponsor, that he supposed the proposed expedition to Siberia would be a small one, Lloyd George, in one of

¹ Letter to General Peyton C. March, Chief of Staff, June 24, 1918.

his blue-sky moods, said that this would be absurd under present conditions and that "Japan must come in with her last man, even to the extent of 2,500,000 men."¹

Accepting the remark as literal it might be construed that Lloyd George, under the spell of the American example, assumed that Ally Japan, also under the same spell, once she was committed to an overseas expedition, would be equally generous of man-power, funds and effort without expectation of territorial or material compensation.

"I do not think," Bliss had said in the letter to March, "that either Mr. Lloyd George or M. Clemenceau (but particularly the latter) are very well pleased with my views. And that is because they attribute to me a degree of influence which I do not possess and which I have not attempted to exercise even if I thought I possessed it."

The way he must have received Lloyd George's statement that Japan might have to put 2,500,000 men into Siberia may have made Bliss' views just as unacceptable to the British as to the French prime minister.

Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando had their Foreign Ministers, Balfour, Pichon and Sonnino, with them when at a secret meeting at the Seventh Session of the Supreme War Council, July 2, they took action which, according to Bliss' information, was based on a document from British sources.

"The Supreme War Council consider that since the last meeting a complete change has come over the situation in Russia and Siberia, which makes Allied intervention in these countries an imperative necessity. . . .

"There is no doubt that the Bolshevik power is waning. It is daily becoming clearer to all classes in Russia, including ex-soldiers, peasants and workmen, that the Bolsheviks cannot fulfill their promises of the social millennium, and that anarchy, disorder and starvation lie ahead under the Bolshevik régime. The accounts from all our representatives agree upon this. It is further clear that the Bolsheviks have no real power with which to support their rule. They have entirely failed to raise an effective army. They remain in office simply because Russia is too divided to create any alternative organization with which to supplant them.

¹ Letter to General Peyton C. March, Chief of Staff, June 24, 1918.

"The liberal and democratic elements urgently ask for allied intervention, and make it clear that while they desire economic assistance, the essential need is military support. Unless they can secure effective allied support in the field, and a base upon which to rally, the reactionary forces, backed by German bayonets, will inevitably crush the movement for national freedom and regeneration.

"Allied intervention, therefore, is urgently necessary in order to save Russia from the establishment of an autocracy supported by German bayonets. If, however, the Allies are to bring effective assistance to liberal Russia not only must they occupy Murmansk and Archangel in order to retain the bridge-heads into Russia from the north from which forces can eventually advance rapidly to the center of Russia, but they must also control Siberia to the Urals without delay. If the Germans gain control of Western Siberia as well as of Archangel and Murmansk they close the last means of contact between Russia and the outside world, and they obtain possession of the supplies of food without which Russia will starve.

"The Germans have already made the Black Sea a German lake, they are advancing as fast as they can on the Caspian, which will give them control of the Volga and its water communications with Western Siberia, and they are preparing to occupy the Murman coast before winter. If they once succeed in these objects the German domination of Russia would be complete. They will then not only control Russian resources, but under penalty of starvation they may be able to compel the Russian people to serve as labor and possibly even as recruits for their armies in the field. All hopes of the regeneration of Russia on truly democratic lines depends upon the seizure by the Allies of the granary of Western Siberia without delay.

"Allied intervention is essential in order to win the war. There is no doubt that if the Germans fail to gain a decision in the West in the next few weeks, they will turn East and endeavor, with all their power, to paralyze any possibility of the national regeneration of Russia during the war. They know as well as we know that there is but the smallest chance of an allied victory on the Western Front in 1919, unless Germany is compelled to transfer a considerable amount of her strength back again from West to East. . . ."¹

Clemenceau had won Foch over to the plan to send an army into Siberia, British and Americans, but no French, to go with the Japanese. As the responsible military chief of the whole, his prestige enhanced by his effective dispositions in checking the fourth German offensive, Foch's opinion would carry great weight with President Wilson. Having made the decision to send forces both to north-

¹ Supreme War Council, Document Number 260.

ern Russia and Siberia, the next step was to concoct a cablegram which would be successful in its appeal to President Wilson in time to have the expeditions in movement before winter closed in. The resolution, as passed by the three statesmen, had said that it had the support of all the Military Representatives when it had not that of Bliss. But this was a detail to the three in their eager conquering mood of distant adventure.

They found that Foch would not assent to their statement to the President that "there is no reasonable probability of such superiority over the enemy being concentrated by the Allies as will ensure victory on the western front in 1918." Quoting him as authority the three had sent a cable to the President, written within sound of the guns at Château-Thierry, only a month before, saying that 100 American divisions would be a sufficient superiority for victory on the western front although the Russian front were not reconstituted. So the phrase was changed "to shorten the war by the reconstitution of the Russian front." On the suggestion of M. Pichon the references to Kerensky were eliminated as it might appear to be favoring one party of the Russian outs to another.¹

When a question was raised on this point Lloyd George explained that the reason why "considerable forces" had been used in the draft "was because an impression appeared to exist in the United States that only a very small force would do—two or three regiments." It was agreed to change the "considerable" to "adequate," as less likely to alarm the President.

The attitude of the Japanese had also to be considered. Would they agree to go far enough for the purpose the three had in mind? It now appeared that they would not go at all without the approval of the United States. The first draft of the resolution said they had agreed to go as far as Irkutsk. This was changed to read that they had agreed to "send an expedition into Siberia, provided they were assured of the approval and active support of the United States government, and though they have not engaged themselves to go beyond Irkutsk, there is no ground for thinking that this necessarily represents the limits of their efforts."

The prime ministers and their Foreign Ministers had to be on

¹ Cablegram Number 140, Bliss to War and State Departments, and Bliss' letter to Baker, July 9, 1918.

their guard against Japanese territorial ambitions and any threat against America's Open Door policy in China, and at the same time encourage the Japanese to send a large force beyond the Urals. They were also in the dark as to just how much information the President possessed, what had passed between Washington and Tokyo, and they had also to keep in mind that it was out of American loans, if not direct payments, that the expedition must be financed. Bliss' duty was to keep his government informed. In his cablegram of July 2 he said:

"At the moment of the meeting of the Supreme War Council today I was furnished with the following copy of a telegram received by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs from their Ambassador in Tokyo: 'The Ambassador of the French Republic at Tokyo received June 24, 1918, a reply from the Imperial Japanese Government to the proposition which had been made on June 7, 1918, by Mr. Balfour, in the name of the British, Italian and French Governments, on the subject of an intervention at Washington. From this communication it appears that Japan does not think that it ought to join the three powers in exerting influence upon Mr. Wilson. Baron Goto prefers to receive from Washington a free acceptance and does not wish to exert any pressure on the United States. As for the rest, Japan has decided to act if the American Government promises it its unconditional material and moral support. It adheres to the principles set forth in its memorandum, but does not engage itself to push military action beyond eastern Siberia. According to Baron Goto Irkutsk would be the extreme limit, but, he added that it was possible that they might go still further, everything depended upon events. It was this cablegram which caused the three Prime Ministers to eliminate the words 'as far as Irkutsk.'"

Bliss added that the Military Representatives had not yet been directed to prepare a plan for the expedition. It was so far nebulous, subject to American compliance which it was hoped to gain through Balfour, who was to send the cable to the President on behalf of the Prime Ministers. Bliss' own scepticism as to the value of the venture became rigid opposition on the part of March, the Chief of Staff, who was forcing every ounce of our strength to meet the ambitious and colossal program of reinforcements demanded by Foch and Pershing a month before.

The scene of the diplomatic play now shifted to Washington where the Allied missions and ambassadors became the protagonists of

intervention in Russia. Baker was in the thick of conflicting Russian information as to the background for the Allied appeals when he wrote:

"We have been literally beset with the Russian question in its various forms. I have had repeated conferences with the British Ambassador, and in the last month it seems to me more people have come from Russia, each knowing exactly the answer to the Russian problem, than happened in a previous year. . . .

"Raymond Robins, who was a member of the Red Cross Commission there, is quite sure that the Bolsheviks represent 'God in Russia'—at least to the extent of representing the only power which has achieved any recognition, and that the true course to follow is a frank acknowledgment of Soviet power, with Lenin and Trotzky as a part of it, so long as the Soviets continue to give them their confidence.

"On the other hand, most of the people whom I have seen from Russia profess to have allied themselves with what they call the Intelligentsia. To them, Lenin and Trotzky, and the Bolshevik power generally, are anathema, and any blinking look of recognition is playing directly into Germany's hands.

"I mentioned to Lord Reading that Irkutsk was too many thousand miles from the eastern front to be of any help. He replied, 'It is nearer than Vladivostok,' to which I replied that that sounded to me like saying that a man was nearer the moon when he was standing on top of his house, in view of the fact that he would still be too far away to have any chance of getting there. In the meantime, the Czech regiments in Siberia and Russia have brought a new element into the discussion. Clearly, we cannot allow them to remain unsupported and unsupplied, and while the President has not notified me of any determination on his part, I am expecting him to seek some sort of solution to the problem which will render substantial aid to the Czechs and at the same time express our sympathy and willingness to be helpful to the Russian people."¹

Meanwhile pressure had not ceased on Bliss; Pershing's headquarters had also been flooded with propaganda. He had said in a cable in repeating the sense of the reports brought to him, "With Russia once in the conflict on the side of Germany, the man-power of the Central Powers would become inexhaustible."² But this cable, sent June 7, was before the situation on the western front had changed for the better, and had the object of keeping Washing-

¹ Letter, Baker to Bliss, July 8, 1918.

² Cablegram A.E.F.—S—1253.

ton informed while, of course, Pershing would not have favored any diversion of reinforcements from the western front to the visionary plan of a new eastern front.

The first decision for the War Department was whether to dispatch a small force to Murmansk in northern Russia. On July 9 Baker sent a cable asking Bliss for his view.¹ Bliss replied with his official and personal views. The official held that without compromise "any Allied action here would be impossible." A small force might hold the northern ports during the winter, win Russian sympathy, and be the nucleus of a larger force of Russians which would hold the railroad. The northern ports were essential to any general plan of intervention in Russia, in which he had little faith. But we should supply only our fair share of any force. His personal view was:

"It seems to me that our Allies want the United States to commit ourselves to expeditions to various places where, after the war, they alone will have any special interests. . . . We must fight somewhere, and originally we selected France and at the request of the Allies themselves."²

In a letter Bliss said:

"There is no doubt that the whole enterprise is a gamble; it may conceivably put us in the position of being committed at a later date (but I can hardly conceive it to be before the Spring of 1919) to a larger military enterprise."³

General Bridges, military chief of the British Mission in Washington, brought a most logical letter to bear in stating his earnest conviction that the war could be won only by reconstituting the eastern front, and that success there might save the Americans countless lives in a campaign in 1919 on the western front.⁴ High policy as represented by the prime ministers, who were the President's three high political colleagues in the war, and American public and Congressional opinion which had taken up the Russian cause prevailed upon him. He made his notable statement of war aims in his assent on July 22, and we sent two regiments from the Philippines to be followed by 5,600 men from the Pacific coast to coöperate,

¹ Cablegram Number 68, War Department to Bliss.

² Bliss to War Department, Cable Number 148.

³ Letter to Baker, July 9, 1918.

⁴ To Baker, July 20, 1918.

under the command of Major General William S. Graves, with the Japanese and British forces in that strange expedition to eastern Siberia which had been bruited since the Bolsheviks had made peace with Germany. We also sent an infantry regiment and a battalion of engineers from the A.E.F. to Murmansk.

A week before the President's decision, July 15, the fifth and last German offensive began. The Third and Forty-second American divisions had a part in its repulse. On July 18 the First and Second American divisions had taken a brilliant part in the Allied offensive against the base of the Marne salient toward Soissons, advanced seven miles, and captured 6,500 prisoners and 143 guns. The day after the first British contingent arrived at Vladivostok—with the American divisions, Third, Fourth, Twenty-sixth, Twenty-eighth, Thirty-second, Forty-second and Seventy-seventh (at the end) in the action—the Marne salient was closed. America now had 1,300,000 men in France. On August 8 the British, Canadians and Australians made their magnificently successful thrust beyond Amiens. By the time the first American contingent landed at Vladivostok, August 16, Pershing was gathering his divisions for his St. Mihiel offensive. The tide had turned on the western front before the Allied army in Siberia was within five thousand miles of the line for a reconstituted eastern front.

XXIX

ARBITER AMONG THE NATIONS

It has been said before, and is worth repeating, that the troubles of the Peace Conference were foreshadowed in the labors of the Supreme War Council, to which historians of the Peace Conference might well have paid more attention.

At the Seventh Session, July 1-4, in which the statesmen were united for the Russian adventure, there was anything but harmony on other subjects. It will be recalled that in the previous session in the first days of June,—after the Germans had just taken Château-Thierry and Paris seemed to be in danger again,—the old American maxim about the importance of hanging together to escape being hanged separately had its counterpart in the languages of the other Allies. But emotions suppressed then might be released now that the fourth German offensive had been checked, Paris had forgotten its alarm of a month before, and the Italians had repulsed an Austrian offensive. After the decision about the Far Eastern situation, which had the glamour of a new experiment as short cut to victory, tempers flashed over the Near Eastern, which was a bitter inheritance of a past adventure which had begun in Gallipoli and been transferred upon the evacuation of Gallipoli to the new Allied base at Salonika.

Counting the Serbians and the Greeks and the French and British forces at Salonika, the Allies had some 600,000 troops against 400,000 Bulgars. The Allies, in their courtship of Rumania and Bulgaria, had succeeded in bringing Rumania in on their side, but the honors had been with the Central Powers in the case of Bulgaria. Sir Edward Grey had been criticized by practical men for having refused to traffic as a bribe-giver in offering King Ferdinand of Bulgaria a sufficiently large honorarium and territorial guarantees to interest him in making the world safe for democracy.

Although Bulgaria was in on the enemy side, practical men still thought that she might be bought out, thus clearing the Balkans of the enemy's threat to the Mediterranean and parting him from his Turkish ally. It had been early in May, after the grave crisis

of the second German offensive, while the Allies wondered where the third would strike, that General Belin, the French Military Representative, submitted to Bliss a document, prepared in the political branch of the French military section, suggesting that Bulgaria be offered territorial compensation at the expense of Ally Serbia and Ally Greece. All Serbia had been heroic to the Allies at the time of the Austrian invasion in 1914 and Venizelos the hero statesman at the time his loyalty had brought Greece into the war; but now Serbia had lost value as a military factor while Venizelos had difficulties with mutinies in the Greek army and had brought disappointingly little material military aid to bear. The French plan seemed to serve the Mediterranean interests of France, and also those of Italy who would not welcome a future Yugo-Slavian foothold on the coast of the Adriatic, which she would make an Italian sea.

Bliss remarked that the Belin document was rather interesting as showing the drift of some men's minds, and continued:

"General Belin tells me that he has shown it to M. Clemenceau and that he approves of the policy indicated therein. . . . After reading it and noting the suggested action by the President of the United States I asked General Belin if I might communicate it to Washington, which he authorized me to do. The policy may commend itself to diplomats who play with territories and peoples as we do with pawns on a chess-board, and it may appeal to some military men who may grasp at it as a means of beating the enemy, but to me it is repugnant. After leading up to the rather naïve declaration that the time has come to 'jettison cargo' or 'throw out ballast' (by which he means Serbia and Greece), he suggests that this task might be assigned to our President 'who has no engagements of any kind with respect to Serbia.' I cannot think that this idea will take very strongly in the United States.

"It would be bad enough if Bulgaria had thus far remained in a state of neutrality and it was now desired, by means of this bribe to induce her to join the Entente; but, to take one of the powers of the Quadruple Alliance, which has been fighting from the beginning for the same devilish and iniquitous things that the other three have been fighting for, and, in the hope of detaching it from its alliance, give it all and more than it was fighting for in that unholy alliance, it seems to me would remove the last vestige of principle for which we are supposed to be fighting.

"And the worst of it is that, were we to surrender our principles in this matter, we might find that we had lost our honor and had gained nothing in return; because Germany might enter into the same game

and offer a higher bribe. The whole policy suggested by General Belin's paper rests on the assumption that Bulgaria can be bribed (which is doubtless true); but, if so, she will take the largest bribe offered. Moreover, when it comes to offering large and unscrupulous bribes, the one being bribed may think that it means a diminishing ability on the part of the briber to 'deliver the goods.'

"One thing is certain, that if we surrender our principles we will soon be floundering deeper and deeper in a very nasty mire. I doubt whether England will take kindly to General Belin's proposed policy. But it is hard to tell what nations will do in these days if they think that their straits are desperate enough."¹

It was at this session—as previously mentioned in quoting a letter from Bliss in offering the incident as an example of the difficulty of writing history when there were no true minutes—that Lloyd George and Clemenceau had their furious colloquy over the naming of General Franchet d'Esperey in place of General Guillaumat to the command at Salonika by Marshal Foch. Lloyd George said he had not been consulted in the appointment. He twitted Clemenceau about d'Esperey's utter surprise by the third German offensive, and Clemenceau responded by twitting Lloyd George about British stupidity in the loss of Gough's army in the March offensive.

After they had cooled down both admitted some confusion about the Salonika situation, but when the advisability of a Macedonian offensive came up, Lloyd George and Clemenceau turned testy again. Lloyd George said that d'Esperey's own words since his arrival in Salonika showed he evidently intended to do no more than make studies. Clemenceau said Lloyd George had missed the line "assume an offensive attitude" in Franchet d'Esperey's report. In his most teasing ironical tone he begged Lloyd George to define with his usual lucidity just what were the powers of a commander-in-chief in the Balkans, anyhow.

"If it was thought that the word study meant the occupation of a general was solely for the purpose of making studies, he [Clemenceau], for his part was ready to bring back the entire expeditionary force from Salonika. He had been the man who of all others had criticized the Balkan operation the most; he had been insulted and abused by all the journalists for having expressed his opposition a hundred times. He had never had any confidence in the result of an offensive there. Could

¹ Letter to Baker, May 11, 1918.

he now be suspected of wanting to let loose an offensive on a grand scale?"¹

When war memories were so short it would not have been in order for Lloyd George to have reminded the Premier of France that he was a journalist himself, who had written biting criticism against the blunders and secrecy of the war administration before he became Premier.

Finally, tempers cooling again, Clemenceau said that "complete confidence and trust should exist among the Allies"; and the talk reverted to some method of winning Bulgaria over to the side of the Allies, which would relieve the Salonika troops of an offensive and perhaps reinforce the western front. Balfour said:

"The Bulgarians had shown themselves to be the most untrustworthy people in Europe. They had revealed themselves as the arch traitors of the war. They had outdone all the masters of intrigue of the Italian Renaissance. The stupendous deceit which they had played on the Rumanians must not be forgotten. As far as he was concerned, he believed nothing that the Bulgarians could say. They deceived because they were Bulgarians. It was quite possible that they wished to betray the Central Powers. Perhaps they did: for a price. He must therefore ask 'what was the price which the Allies were prepared to pay?' This, however, was purely a diplomatic question and not a military one."

When the listening Bliss' opinion was sought, he said there were no American troops at Salonika and therefore his view must be accepted in this light. A solely defensive attitude was a mistake, and how far the commander-in-chief should commit himself to an offensive action should depend upon judgment which was formed on the spot. Why not invite General Guillaumat, who had recently returned from Salonika, to give his opinion to the Council? Guillaumat gave his opinion in favor of an offensive, which the British Military Representative surprisingly opposed, and said preparations must be begun soon if a general attack were to be made in October.

Finally the statesmen, finding the problem was both political and military, decided against any general offensive but to keep up the offensive spirit of the troops by raids until the Military Representatives should make a further inquiry in conference with the diplomats; and that hereafter in case of any change in the commander-in-chief

¹ American Minutes, Seventh Session of the Supreme War Council, July 1-4, 1918.

in Salonika all the governments should be consulted.¹

At the meeting of the soldiers and diplomats, July 11, Pichon and Lord Robert Cecil united in painting in even blacker tones than Balfour's the abominable character of King Ferdinand, who was left without one redeeming trait. Cecil said he wanted "nothing to do with him," then added,

"But in politics one must not permit a feeling of moral indignation to sway him. We are charged by our respective countries with the conduct of the war. If we feel we should take a chance somewhere we should not hesitate to do so. . . . We must not, therefore, slam the door in King Ferdinand's face. He agreed with M. Pichon that we could not offer the Bulgars Constantinople or any compensations. To do so would make us suspect to our Allies and help him in trading with our Allies. But if Bulgaria should conclude that it could no longer trust Austria we should not refuse to hear what guarantees she has to offer—but the King's character should not blind us." ²

Evidently the Serbs and the Greeks had heard of the plan proposed by General Belin to jettison cargo and they had given the French Foreign Minister a flutter. M. Pichon said he did not see what there was to offer Ferdinand which would make it worth his while at present. The French government had just formally announced to the Serbs and Greeks that they would not be abandoned. Would we abandon Serbia and Greece to offer Constantinople to Bulgaria after having previously promised Constantinople to Russia? At length opinion inclined toward tentative plans for an offensive and to wait on political developments.

The fractiously intricate difficulties of the Balkan situation were illumined in Bliss' weekly letter to Baker, July 17, in which he refers to another issue, which led to wrangling when Italy objected to the Yugo-Slav prisoners who had fought with the Austrian army being returned to Serbia for service with the Serbian army in the cause of the Allies:

"You will note in these Minutes, as well as in the discussion (herewith) in the last meeting of the Supreme War Council on the question of Yugo-Slav recruitment in Italy, how closely connected most of the military questions are with political matters. In reference to the offen-

¹ Resolution Number 5, Seventh Session of the Supreme War Council.

² American Minutes.

sive in Macedonia it was evident from his statements to us that General Guillaumat's desire to provide an opportunity for an offensive movement by the Serbs and the Greeks is due, to a considerable extent, to his belief that without some such action the present Greek army will melt away, just as, to a considerable extent, the Serbian army melted away. On the other hand, it has been plainly stated to us that a movement by a force of Serbians and Greeks, which would result in the latter approaching certain points which are viewed by the Serbians with jealous apprehension, would cause the Serbians and Greeks to come to blows.

"I believe a good deal of the hesitation of the political men to approve a general offensive in Macedonia results from the political complications of the Balkan problem. A good many of the military men seem to be of the opinion that no general offensive in Macedonia can be really successful unless the Powers, including Serbia and Greece, come to a thoroughly satisfactory agreement as to what is to be done in the Balkans at the end of the war. Without some such agreement they think that the Allied army might pull apart after the first decided success. . . .

"There seems to be no doubt that the French occupation of Salonika and their development of that port has been pretty nearly as much with a view to commercial as to the military advantages. I have heard it said by well-informed people that they think it would be very difficult to persuade the French to withdraw from Salonika and that they had no intention of leaving it if they could help it. This is one reason for the feeling of unrest among the British (and others too) over the fact that the Allied armies in Macedonia have a French commander-in-chief,—except the Italians at Valona, who are independent."

In a postscript to the same letter Bliss appears in his part of arbiter, in which he was so frequently successful because he never offered to act as one, and often refused, and because when he did act as one he gave the credit to the generosity of those whose differences had been harmonized.

"General Guillaumat asked me to meet him in his office in Paris. I could see at once that his interview was inspired by higher authority and that he wanted to put me in the position of an arbiter between the French, who are now determined to have an offensive in Macedonia in October, and the British who are hesitating. He is one of the most level-headed Frenchmen I have met. . . . I told him that I would not do anything that would force a decision as between the British and the French because that, of course, would put me in the position of one who dictated the final plan of action which would be contrary to the wishes of my government. But I would be very glad to go over the details with him, which I did.

"In the discussion that followed it appeared that all were agreed that it would be wise for the Allies to continue preparations which they are now making, as though they had decided upon an offensive in October. This would have the effect of holding the Greek and Serbian forces together, because they would live in the hope that something was going to be done. . . . One serious thing admitted by all was that the Greek army would melt away before the coming winter, as the Serbian army to a considerable extent had done, if no hope was given them of an offensive movement by which they might win back certain lost territory. . . . The British said they would accept my proposal to the effect that preparations continue and the question of an offensive in October be decided by the Allied governments about that time in the light of the political and military conditions found then to exist. The French yielded and that is the way the question now rests."

On August 3, after the Marne salient had been closed, the Military Representatives to whom the diplomats had left final action, decided definitely for the Macedonia offensive not later than October 1; but Bliss inserted this qualification:

"Provided that these preparations shall not demand any assistance in men and material from the western front and shall not divert any tonnage available and that may become available, which is necessary for the continued arrival, at the maximum possible rate, of the reinforcements of men and material required on the western front by the plan approved by the commander-in-chief."

Of course, the Allies had sought to impress Bliss with the importance of our sending an American detachment to Salonika to show the flag for the sake of morale; requests came from Greece and Serbia; they came for men, money and material from as far away as Georgia and Armenia in order to aid in reconstituting the eastern front.

A report was received from the Armenians and the Georgians that they could raise an army of 150,000 if they had the funds, which could not be sent through any banking house, diplomatic service or by plane, but must be sent as "bullion in disguise." Bliss concluded, after investigation, that the few Armenians, Greeks, Syrians and Russian emigrés who could be organized would not be able to get through the hostile tribes and past the Bolsheviks before they met the Germans, and that no disguise in northern Turkey would keep that bullion from being dissipated before it reached its destination.

"Bliss would have been the pillar of this or any other council, for he brought to the Alliance, where the members of every inter-Allied team always pull different ways what it needed most: rigid impartiality, even toward his own government. 'Very well, let Bliss arbitrate' (*Eh bien, prenons Bliss comme juge de paix*'), Foch used to exclaim when a discussion became heated; and Bliss listened like a sage and benevolent pachyderm. But once his mind was made up he stuck his hoofs in the ground and was immovable. Even Foch dashed at him in vain."¹

He had dug in in characteristic stubbornness in the following:

"I added that 'the Government of the United States reserves to itself the right and the power to decide as to whether it will intervene in any new theatre of war and, should it do so, when and with what effectiveness it would intervene; and that, whilst I could not prophesy what action the United States might be willing to commit itself to in this or that theatre, of one thing I am absolutely certain and that is that my government will never consent to delegate unreservedly to another government or to any one man the power to determine the time and the place.'" ²

Since the American Odyssey to France had begun in earnest the Italians were especially interested that some of the ships packed with the battalions from our training camps should be diverted from Brest to Genoa. They made their demands commensurate with their needs and their idea of our resources in man-power.

"The Italian Military Representative stated that a considerable reinforcement in Italy might be necessary, either to meet an enemy offensive supported by the German divisions that might be transferred to that front or to make an offensive of their own. He wanted the Allies to be prepared to send not less than 20 divisions to Italy on the call of the Italian Commander-in-Chief, among which were to be 'several' (number not mentioned) American divisions. He wanted to have training areas established in Italy to which an unknown number of American divisions would be sent to complete their training and take their place on the Italian front."³

Bliss' reply was the same that he gave later when another influence was brought to bear in favor of an American army in Italy:

¹ *At the Supreme War Council.* Wright.

² Letter to Baker, July 17, 1918.

³ Letter to Baker, July 22, 1918.

"Ambassador Thomas Nelson Page from Rome stopped to see me some days ago on his way to London. He, like everyone else who goes to Italy, has become saturated with the Italian idea. He insisted that we should send 500,000 men to Italy. I told him I had nothing to do with that question. I told him to go and talk to General Pershing and Marshal Foch. He said that the Italians disliked the French very much and the French reciprocated the feeling. He did not believe he would get much encouragement from Marshal Foch's Headquarters. I told him frankly that I did not think he would get much encouragement at General Pershing's Headquarters."¹

In this letter Bliss mentioned the reasons why the Italians wanted a large force of Americans in Italy. Fear: they were mortally afraid of the Germans while their reports of large numbers of Germans massing against them were unverified. Money: they had heard of the large sums the Americans were spending in France, and the Italian politicians were being blamed for not getting their share. Ambition: the Italians wanted to strike a major blow for territorial gains and future power, while the British had been withdrawing strong divisions from Italy and sending weak in their place because they did not want, as they said, to reinforce a line of rest billets with weak troops.

"There is a general undercurrent of belief here that the Allies will not even give Italy that which they specifically promised. Italy knows this. Therefore she would like to have the decisive blow struck from Italy rather than France, with her army as the predominating factor."

Bliss' impartiality, patience and ideals were much tried by the Italy of Orlando's pandering and hackneyed politics, the Italy which had made a secret bargain for her price in coming into the war, the Italy which was to give Benito Mussolini, then fighting as a soldier in her army, his opportunity.

"I have recently heard a great deal about rotten conditions in the civil communities in Italy due to the corrupt practices of food speculators. What they really need in Italy is a Clemenceau, and not an Orlando, who would stand a few of these speculators against a wall and shoot them '*pour encourager les autres*' as Voltaire said when the English executed Admiral Byng in the Mediterranean. The execution of a couple

¹ Letter to March, September 3, 1918.

of men here in France has had a tremendously good effect on both civil and military morale.”¹

The difficulty of the relations with the Italian chiefs, who were so watchful of their prerogatives, when the Italian army had never accepted Foch's authority, is illustrated by this reference to President Wilson's statement of war policy in which he had said that American reinforcement of the Italian front must be referred to the Supreme Command:

“You will have already received my telegram in which I asked to have the Italian Ambassador made to understand, if he did not at the beginning, that the words ‘Supreme Command’ which appear in the President's instructions means the supreme command of General Foch and is not the ‘*Comando Supremo*’ of General Diaz. You may think that this is a very small point, but I have discovered that most of the differences of opinion here grow out of small points.”²

Bliss mentioned one of the train of consequences which began to appear soon after we decided to send troops to Russia.

“I have received a rather curious request from General Diaz, Chief of Staff of the Italian army, through the Italian Military Representative, for information as to what would be the line of action taken by the United States Government on a proposition to have a lot of Russian officers serve with the different commands of the Allied troops who may be sent to Siberia. I do not know what particular concern this is of General Diaz, but I suppose it comes up because of pressure originating with the innumerable Russian societies in Europe. In fact, he says that it relates to a proposition of what is called ‘The League of the Regeneration of Russia,’ to have Russian officers now scattered all about Europe serve with these Allied commands in Siberia. The countries of the various Allies here are filled with Russian officers ‘out of a job.’ They are all anxious to get on the American pay-roll and I fancy that the Governments here, who are supporting a great number of them, would be rather glad to unload as many as possible on us. My own opinion is that if we were to tie ourselves up with any of these Russian officers, whether from motives of charity toward them, or any other, we might create a great deal of trouble for ourselves and for the Commander-in-Chief of any American forces that might be in Siberia.”³

¹ Letter to March, September 18, 1918.

² Letter to Baker, July 22, 1918.

³ Letter to Baker, August 7, 1918.

XXX

A BREATHING SPELL

LIFE for Bliss and his staff at Versailles became routine with regular office hours which might be prolonged far into the night. Colonel U. S. Grant 3d, whose memoranda among the Bliss papers suggest the inheritance of his grandfather's lucidity and brevity, was an aide to whom Bliss was as attached as General Schofield had been to Captain Bliss in the old days. Grant was at Bliss' elbow in his office and lived with him in the house where he was quartered; accompanied him on his trips to the front, to conferences and on his walks in the palace gardens. It was Bliss' delight to dine at some small restaurant and picture the lives and characters of the people at the other tables out of his observation.

"That little woman is really the boss though her husband, the fat man, does the orating. Do you notice that fellow is casting eyes at that woman? He better look out, his wife is watching him. If we wait long enough we may see her in action."

When Grant was sent to Berne for the negotiations with the Germans about the treatment of prisoners of war, Wallace took his place temporarily. Lochridge, Wells, Grant, Wallace, Poillon, Browning, Embick, Coward were members of his family. All wished they could be at the front and have a chance to be shot at by something other than the paper daggers of Allied controversies. Wells, upon his promotion, was assigned to be chief of staff of a corps, and Bliss keenly felt the loss. His staff was small compared with that of the other Military Representatives although he was in the rôle of statesman as well as soldier. He had trained all for his special work; they knew his ways; and he considered that they could best help to win the war by remaining with the little clan.

From colonels to privates, all the clan knew his moods, but it was Grant who most often heard him in his soliloquies for which "his brooding intelligence," as Baker called it, had such abundant material in all the racial, political and military differences which must

be harmonized. His sense of decency was as often outraged by political stratagems and chicane as it had been by the corruption in the Cuban customs; and in the privacy of his house he would let his indignation have full play, enforced by all the expletives at his command. Having excoriated the war and human folly, he then turned sage reviewing all the arguments of the British and of the French and Italians in the present impasse and summing up the case in his search for the wise course and how to win them to accept it.

Since the Mexican crisis, through the ordeal as Chief of Staff and the crises of the German offensives, he had had no rest; still he retained his capacity for work, his unflagging mental interest in any problem. This saved him from anything but momentary cynicism in a task which gave so much food for cynicism. He was a trial to the more military minded members of his staff who tried to "get him to assume his full right and all the fuss that goes with four stars."

In the summer heat he would be working at his desk in his shirt-sleeves when Grant would bring word that he was called to some meeting. Then he would put on his blouse, and labor with the hooks of his high military collar.

"Grant, have I got them all in? Am I in my corset all right? If not, give me a hand with a hook though you choke me to death."

Then, adjusting his eyeglasses, putting on his cap at the proper angle, squaring his shoulders and picking up the short cane he used to carry, his look seeming to say, "There! Don't I look a classy four-star general?" he proceeded to keep his appointment. When he became a delegate to the Peace Conference Wallace assigned three smart orderlies to attend on him, one always to be in front of his door. His order to return them to the barracks was instant and vigorous. But when one of his British colleagues remarked on what a fine looking soldier he had in one of the orderlies who attended him to his car, and he saw how pleased the orderly was, Bliss compromised. He was willing an orderly should escort him to the car; "but, Wallace, I don't want that ornament in front of my door. I never had that before, and don't want it now."

When he went to Brest to meet Secretary Baker, he concluded, at sight of an army commissary, that rubber boots were in order for the then prevalent winter rains and mud. The soldier at the counter brought him some pairs for inspection, and Bliss asked if he might

have a box for a seat as he tried them on. As he bent over the soldier saw the four stars and ducked back into the storeroom to say to his colleague: "Look! That old boy has got the whole Milky Way on his shoulders." Four stars! Only Pershing was supposed to have four in the A. E. F. They were the very top, and no other general had more than two then.

American soldiers in France who saw the four stars on Bliss' car were often puzzled when they recognized, inside, a face so different from Pershing's. Bliss found a pair of boots that fitted him, paid for them, thanked the soldier for the use of the box in trying them on, and departed with his old boots in a package under his arm, which was not quite good form for a four-star general.

No one who ever served under him at Versailles or before, however, needed more than one reminder of his insistence on punctuality. He was never late for an appointment himself, and no subordinate might be without a most vital excuse. The members of his staff at Versailles were kept well aware of his punctiliousness in every detail of his relations with Pershing's headquarters, although they were quite alive to the talk in the lower circles of Pershing's staff about those entirely superfluous desk soldiers at Versailles.

One day Bliss found that an officer representing the American Section of the Supreme War Council at Foch's headquarters had written a report as coming from the American Mission. Bliss made it very clear that the only American mission at Foch's headquarters was Pershing's. Any officer Bliss had there was there solely by an "informal and personal arrangement I made with the Marshal."

But he considered himself in his rights in protesting against the transfer of Private André Theriot to the A. E. F. Theriot's loss would have been as serious to Bliss as the loss of a division to the Italian or Macedonian front would have been to Pershing. Theriot spoke French well, knew all the statesmen's and generals' names, and was one of the three operators serving night and day shifts at the telephone.

The colonel in charge of personnel who had made the transfer could not have been more prompt in canceling it if he had heard Bliss' protest in person; and that might have been paternally robustious in the protection of his little family from raids. When he arrived at his office in the morning his staff always had an eye peeled to

make sure whether he had found Horace as satisfying as usual or he had had a good detective story the previous evening; or, after his nocturnal battle with a mass of documents which held quite contradictory information, he faced another batch which added a new and confusing element on his desk.

Morning was not always the most amiable period of the day for him. He might warm up for the day's labors with an Olympian outburst on the nature of his task and the state of the world in general. He liked an intimate listener present who would understand that it was not Bliss, the diplomat, but Bliss, the human being, in action. Upon Wallace's return after an absence, Bliss said to him: "Take your old desk where you will be near me. I have not had a good cussing bee for some time and I feel I shall be fit for one soon."¹

He had irritations enough, when he would never admit that he might be overworked and nervously tired, to warrant the name which the soldiers and clerks gave him, according to H. G. Dwight, who wrote the classic *Stamboul Nights*.

"I dropped into the General's orbit entirely by accident, without election on either side. Like everybody else in those days, I had felt it my duty to get into uniform. Being beyond the good age, however, short-sighted to boot, and a 'native' of hostile Constantinople, I was turned down—though perhaps I might have wangled a commission if I had gone about it with diplomacy. Then a friend of mine in Washington wrote that there was a chance for me to go overseas as an army field clerk, if I cared to try it. Had I known at the time that an army field clerk was the lowest of God's creatures, it is doubtful whether my 'patriotism' would have stood the test. As it was, knowing nothing whatever about the army, I presently found myself carrying on board a transport the locker of an officer with whom I had dined a couple of nights before, and soon after that climbing the back stairs of the Trianon Palace Hotel at Versailles.

"I am so constituted that it amused me. Still, there was too vast a distance between a field clerk and a four-star general with a sense of discipline for me to see very much of my chief. Moreover, there occurred early in our relations an incident which made me excessively careful to keep in my place. One of the staff, knowing that I had written a book or two and thinking to do me a good turn, ordered the books, unbeknownst to me, to be sent to the General. When they arrived the

¹ Colonel William B. Wallace to the author.

General called me in and thanked me. I was so taken aback, first at discovering what had been done and then at having the General suppose I had done it, that at the moment I was struck speechless; and afterwards it seemed stupid to make belated explanations. So I never said anything about it; but the consciousness that the General had thought me capable of so transparent an attempt to ingratiate myself did not encourage me to expand in his presence. Nevertheless he was very kind to me. Perhaps it surprised him to discover so grizzled a specimen among his flock of field clerks."

Dwight's experience shows that Bliss was more familiar with his family's genealogy and his interest in it not so perfunctory as might appear from his answers to letters of inquiry.

"He surprised me the first time he had me in for a once-over by letting me see he knew there were Blisses in my family. He asked me all sorts of questions about them and their inter-marriages, taking evident interest in the genealogy of his house. And he quietly did a great deal, he and his officers, to make life in France tolerable for an elderly field clerk. More than once he gave me exciting papers to translate, he sent me on not the dullest of his errands, after the armistice he included me among those of his entourage who accompanied him to Paris, he finally took me out of uniform and made me a civilian secretary. What I appreciated not least was that he forbore to turn against me the rough side of his tongue. There were moments when it could be uncommonly rough. No doubt the habit of authority leads in that direction and the custom of obedience hardens the listener to it.

"The orderlies and the chauffeurs used to call him their 'old growler'—with a mixture of terror, amusement, pride and loyalty. It was of his preëminence and prerogative to growl louder than anybody else. They were more likely to savor his *bons mots* than to take them to heart. They knew that if they were punctual and kept everything spick-and-span he wouldn't growl. They also knew not only that on occasion he could look the other way but that if they got into trouble he would go to the mat for them. One thing about it was that he had an exceptionally quick mind; and while he had learned by long experience that other people were likely to be a lap or two behind him, he had never quite reconciled himself to it.

"What he really couldn't stand, however, was for those around him to be lazy or dishonest. If they were, they heard about it in a way they never forgot. On the other hand, he was capable of astonishing patience. And he knew how to still knocking knees with two words of commendation, haply with no more than the tone of his voice, that meant more than a volume of compliments.

"Tacitus, you know, was a great favorite of his, and usually lay in reach on his desk. One of my principal jobs, though, was to find him detective stories. He went to bed on those. It didn't much matter what language they were in, but they had to be new—at least to him.

"I don't need to tell you that he had an uncommon gift of expression. I never had anything serious to do with his papers, because I was neither an officer nor a stenographer. But I often heard him dictating, and admired his competence. He would walk up and down the room in great concentration of mind, head down and hands behind his back, saying slowly what he had to say. When he was through it was hardly ever necessary to make a correction. His stenographers were grateful to him for that. Everything was there, in the right order, in the simple and cogent diction of which he was master."¹

While at every turn Versailles appealed to his interest in history, his fondness for music found it a desert. He relished the prospect that three military bands were assigned to play there on Liberty Day, but only one turned up, an American regimental band, which he made the subject of an official letter of commendation to American headquarters for having played for "an hour in pouring rain without a sheet of music." But the letter was cold formality in comparison with his words of rapture at the time.

After the repulse of the fifth German offensive he had time to spare for an occasional day away from Versailles, time to visit cathedrals. It was said that when he was on a very urgent mission, as his car came in sight of noble spires, he might look the other way lest temptation overcome him. It was at Rheims, when they strolled apart, that Wallace found him standing before the cathedral in a soliloquy so intense that every rent by shell fire and every staring vacant window that had held beautiful stained glass seemed to be lacerating his mind and soul, as he damned war and all the ways of war and the barbarism of this supreme outrage. If the present generation must go mad in slaughter, it might at least spare the splendid creation of past generations. He was in a mood of Jovian thunder which would have made all the mischief-making demi-gods seek shelter from the lightning shafts of his words.

He had time to see his son Goring, who had been graduated from West Point and was now an officer of Engineers stationed at Tours.

¹ H. G. Dwight in a letter to the author, June 28, 1934.

Although Bliss was twenty years older than when he was in Spain as attaché, he still had the fresh eye for all he saw, and some of his letters to Mrs. Bliss ran to two thousand words.

"After a number of calls, we went to see the Cathedral. While standing there an old canon came out of the sacristy and politely offered to show me around. He explained the different periods of construction, pointed out the special beauties of the original stained glass windows, took me to see the tomb of the children of Charles VII. Then I went to the Basilica of St. Martin and saw the tomb of that saint in the crypt. Afterwards I saw the two great towers, all that is left of the original Basilica of St. Martin and under one of which is buried Luitgard and the 3d wife of Charlemagne."

Having seen the Basilica of St. Martin he looked in on a scene strictly of the 1918 period, the salvage plant of the American army at Tours.

"There come all the old uniforms, shoes, tents, equipment, etc., of our first 500,000 men in France. Everything that is hopelessly beyond repair is torn up and used to patch up the repairable articles. Worn out shoes are cut up into shoe strings for good ones. Soles are used to make cloth shoes for hospital attendants, etc. I saw 3,500 French women at this work, many of them refugees from the parts of France now held by the Germans."

He found that Goring had stuck so hard at his work that he had not seen as much of Tours since his arrival as his father had in three hours. So he insisted on Goring taking a half holiday.

When Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss took Bliss to a château where a number of people of the old French aristocracy were present, and were gayly attentive to the American general in the glad days when the American army was attacking in force and the enemy retreating, she wondered just what he would have to say about them as they rode homeward. He said he had had a very good time, they had been nice to him and such people helped to make this an interesting world.

Many invitations came to him, and his acceptance depended on official duty or the personal appeal of the host.

These are excerpts from his letters to Mrs. Bliss:

"I told you some time ago of my visit to Esclimont, 8 or 10 kilometers beyond Rambouillet, to visit the Duke and Duchess of Rochefoucauld-

Bissacia. Some weeks ago I received a note from her saying that she was here for that and the following day, to visit her grandmother who was occupying a house in Versailles for the summer, and she said she wanted to present me to her. She asked me to come to tea the following day, which I did and I there met one of the most charming old ladies, after your dear mother and mine, that I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. She is the Baronne de Berckheim, 93 years old, as bright as a new pin. Her husband was a French general, of an old Alsatian family. I met her two sons—one has a title and the other is a retired General. There was also the Count and Countess de Ségur. He must be over 60 and she not far from it. They sang old-fashioned duets in a pretty old-fashioned way. . . .

“Most of the Château Plessis-les-Tours is gone but one fine building containing the room in which Louis XI died is still perfectly preserved (with a little restoration here and there) and is still used for State purposes. I went into the ruined tower and saw the place where Cardinal Balue’s cage was hung when his lord and master Louis was in residence here. You remember Louis used to carry him around with him for (I think) eleven years—or was it nine? . . .

“So we were off for Loches, a most beautiful drive, partly along the left bank of the little river Indre. Here we saw the Château dating from 800 and something, the one time home of the Plantagenets, the Church of St. Ours, very, very old, and what not. But I’ll not attempt to tell you all we saw. Is not the world full of Baedekers? At least, all except France; here you can’t get one for love or money.¹ But you have one and if you read it and just think that I saw everything it tells about you will know what I saw. It was a most glorious day and the view from the tower of Agnès Sorel (under which is her tomb) was glorious. From Loches I went north through the Forest of Loches (full of deer and wild boar) and through Bléré, and thence to Chenonceaux. The Château is built on the bridge spanning the river Cher. Here I met Madame Menier, the wife of the celebrated chocolate man, whose husband owns the château. He is now a corporal in the French army—one of the richest men in France! She is said to be the most beautiful woman in France—and she really looks it.”

He found the old-fashioned duets of Count and Countess de Ségur much to his taste, and he mentions having gone several times to hear them in repertoire. They made him feel at home.

There were other scenes not so pleasant in the course of the grim business of protecting players of old-fashioned duets from the sound of German boots on the pavements of Versailles.

¹ Since it was a German book Baedeker had been barred in France during the war.

"On that day I went with the American Ambassador, Mr. Sharp, and Dr. Morton Prince, who is here as the representative in France for the State of Massachusetts in connection with the troops of that state, to Aumont to visit an Allied hospital there, part of which is set apart for American soldiers. The hospital is conducted and its expenses paid by the Baronne de Rothschild. One of her assistants is an American lady, Miss de Wolfe. The hospital is devoted entirely to the treatment of cases of burns, either from gas or from explosions of gasoline or of powder.

"They employ a special treatment which they call the 'Ambrine Treatment.' Until recently this treatment seems to have had a black eye in the medical services here because the essential part of it is a proprietary one. But it seems that the Baron de Rothschild bought the rights to its use and then made it free. I watched the process of dressing wounds in a number of cases, resulting from frightful burns, some of which, apparently, removed the skin from the whole surface of the body. The treatment consists in spraying the burned surfaces with a liquid which I understand to be composed of certain proportions of paraffine and rubber. The rubber gives a tensity and flexibility which prevents the paraffine from breaking. Apparently after this is applied, all suffering ceases and the dressings can be removed and renewed without causing the slightest pain."¹

He might not have his family in France. As Chief of Staff he had stood fast for the rule against any officer's wife receiving a passport, which included wives who tried to slip past the guard through service in the Red Cross or Y. M. C. A.

"I want you and Eleanor," he wrote to Mrs. Bliss, "each to look after the other's health, *and each of you to do what the other thinks is best!* Each of you is a better judge of what is good for the other than the other is. From all I hear you are doing finely and that is splendid. Make Eleanor drop her work the moment she leaves her office and not take it up until she goes back the next day. She'll do better work in the long run."

Eleanor was in the Geological Survey. When she received a promotion the members of Bliss' staff were immediately informed of the source of his elation. "I have just been talking to Bishop Brent, and I told him."

He had to live economically at Versailles as in the past. Apparently another reason why he did not accept many invitations was his

¹ To Mrs. Bliss, August 1, 1918.

inability to entertain on an extensive scale in return. Solicitude about the provision for home needs appears in all his letters from Madrid to Versailles. When it was bruited that the next meeting of the statesmen might take place in London, he wrote to Mrs. Bliss that he would like to have it there "for a personal reason, because, if I am to be here the coming winter, I must get a new overcoat and I can get a better and cheaper one there than here."

XXXI

VICTORY COMES AS A SURPRISE

THERE was a far more significant historical interest related to the world's future than appears on the surface in the fact that the statesmen put off and continued to put off the next monthly meeting at Versailles which was due early in August. No shadow of a German offensive served to bring them together. The most dour of alarmists could no longer say that Paris, the English Channel or Venice was in present danger.

The statesmen found it convenient to revert to the old system of the interchange of messages instead of personal contact in group counsel. Good news drew them apart in differences they could not easily settle. Better news made the differences more pronounced, and might postpone or endanger victory.

Although Bliss had the relief of half holidays away from Versailles in midsummer heat, he did not want for work. There was always enough of that provided on the industrial side of the war by the Inter-Allied Aviation Committee, the Inter-Allied Tank Committee and the Inter-Allied Transportation Council, which were allied to the functions of the Military Representatives and the Supreme War Council.

The Military Representatives had brought about an agreement for the unification of the various models of tanks and worked out a future plan for unified aviation and bombing forces. Now that the American Liberty motors were coming into production there was not enough to meet the sudden demand of the Allies for their shares; the great tank plant at Châteauroux had been a source of vexation in its slow progress; and the tanks must have Liberty motors, too. All these were technical and economic problems which Bliss had to master as well as those which were more strictly military. Shipping and transport were again to the fore. Every additional soldier brought to France meant more shipping from our own to French ports and more transports across France. Our men were arriving at the rate of ten thousand a day as we kept faith with the

call by Foch, backed by the prime ministers, in the June meeting at the time of the Château-Thierry crisis, for a hundred divisions in France by July, 1919.

At the July meeting, a month later, the statesmen had wrestled with the shipping problem, but without finding a solution. The nimble-minded Lloyd George had become testy with the nimble-minded André Tardieu as interfering with a subject which was Britain's own prerogative.¹ Britain and not France supplied the extra shipping America required for the gigantic 100-division program. The French were very interested in its fulfilment by British shipping, the British thoughtful since they had to supply the shipping.

We had made no promise to comply in full with the 100-division program, which meant four million men and probably more in France, including all the services of supply. On July 23 the War Department informed Bliss by cable that the limit of our capacity would be eighty divisions, and we would not have enough ships of our own for them until the spring of 1919. Even the 80-division program waited on the extension of the draft age and the appropriation of more billions by Congress. When Bliss told this to his colleagues their disappointment included the polite implication that we were not keeping our bargain.

Although the offensive had passed from the enemy to the Allies, all the talk Bliss heard and all the inferences he drew from their present mood showed that they were relying upon a great American army to get in action in 1919 and then to finish the war in 1920. He might have quick irritations over small matters, but in large matters his heat was slow to rise, and the very deliberation with which it rose under cumulative pressure made it the more convincing and determined. This appears in his letter of August 9 to Baker, with its suggestion that the time had passed for the United States to be a complaisant partner in giving of its man-power and funds, and the time had come to take the leadership which this investment warranted. In short, a crisis between the United States and its Allies was approaching:

"I believe that the United States should aim at a successful termination of the war in 1919, and should make that the paramount question and

¹ American Minutes.

do what might be recommended Reading,
(except the action)
each "Mile. Representative", after free study of
his Section, had submitted in writing, some
Ten days ago, his views to Marshal Foch.

When we arrived the Marshal had those papers
on his desk. He said that they were in sub-
stantial agreement with each other and with
his own views, on essential points. It must
point out that every effort must be made by
the Allies to thoroughly and crushingly beat
the Germans on the Western front in France. Must
Yves. His own reasons, some of which I have
already indicated to you.

Marshal Foch then made a statement that
was some what disappointing to me. In the main,
it was ~~that~~

a) The British and French divisions must

be maintained at, at least, their present
strength through next year, at all costs.

b) That 100 American divisions must
be in France by July 1, 1919.

c) That tonnage must be provided, at any
expense, to enable the A.S. to do this.

He instantly reiterated that it was
Man power that he wanted, that he
wanted as much artillery, tanks and
aviation as he could get, but that it
was 'man-power' and again 'man-power'
that he wanted.

He assured me that my question had led
me that he should make this declaration as
'the best decision of the Supreme War Council.'

in all of its dealings with its Allies should keep that question to the front. You may think that this is purely an academic question; that our Allies will say that they are as much interested in ending the war in 1919 as we can be. That of course is what they would say; but in practice they may not be ready to do the things and to make the sacrifices which will be necessary to end the war in that time. They all agree that it can be ended only by American troops, supplies, and money. But I can see it in every discussion at which I am present, and in nearly every paper that is submitted to me, that when the end comes they want certain favorable military situations to have been created in different parts of the world that will warrant demands to be made of the United States which they think will be, perhaps, the principal arbiter of peace terms. If these sufficiently favorable military situations are not created on certain secondary theatres by the beginning of autumn of next year our Allies may be willing to continue through 1920, *at the cost of United States troops and money*, a war which may possibly if not probably be ended with complete success, as far as we are concerned, by operations on the western front in 1919.

"If the mass of the people in Europe knew that the United States was demanding that the Allies should make every effort to end the war in 1919, our government would be supported by the common people of every nation, and I believe that they would endure any possible sacrifice to carry it through. Now they do not see even a suggested time for the end. The time has come to plan a campaign with reasonable hope that it will be the last one and not merely one that will lead to another. What warrant will our government have in proposing that its Allies should agree to such a policy?

"If the proposed 80-division program can be carried through, the United States will have in France before the middle of next year more than the rifle strength of all our Allies on the western front combined.

"Our losses are beginning now. Next year, instead of hearing of the losses of many hundreds of thousand of our Allies on the western front, it will be hundreds of thousands of Americans and a constantly reducing proportion of our Allies. They have lost frightfully in the past, but that does not require the war to be prolonged until our losses equal theirs. It is safe to say that already our American troops have saved the situation here. No Englishman or Frenchman with whom I talk but admits that were not the Americans already here in considerable force the war would be now over, and settled adversely to the Allies. We have already saved France and Europe. We have a right to demand that the hundreds of thousands of young Americans, the present hope of their country and the future hope of the world, who are now ready to give their lives for the common cause, shall not be sacrificed unless it be an absolute necessity. It is not worth while to save the blood and treasure that must be spent in 1920 if we can, by any possibility, end the war in 1919.

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"No one, in my opinion, but the United States can bring this question to a head. . . .

"And so, in a nut-shell, it is this: Do we want to end the war in 1919 or not? If we do, the first step is to get a declaration from the responsible military men as to what effort the United States must make in order to so end the war, and then demand of the Allied world that every other secondary interest,—trade, food, clothing, etc.—be sacrificed to the last limit in order that this effort can be made."

On the day, August 9, that Bliss wrote this letter, he had not yet received the news showing the complete success of Rawlinson's attack with the British, Canadian and Australian troops southeast of Amiens. A German division staff was captured; a whippet tank surprised a German regimental mess breakfasting. The Germans had not shown their accustomed tenacity in resistance. The Amiens-Paris railroad was freed for traffic.

And while Bliss was writing his letter on the second day of this advance, a regiment of the American Thirty-third Division, in training with the British, captured three villages and cleared the whole of the Chippily bend; American troops reached the Vesle, continuing the advance from Château-Thierry; and Pershing was forming his army for the St. Mihiel attack—all illustrating how widespread was the location of American divisions along the front.

Afterward Ludendorff referred to August 8 as the black day of the German Army in the war,¹ but to the Allies it represented the clearing of salients and cheering news which gave them heart for the mighty task of forcing the German hosts out of France and then to capitulation, which was still seen as an enormous and prolonged operation.

On August 14, while the Allies continued to organize their new lines, Bliss covered his letter of August 9 in a cable, pressing the points in the letter:

"If sufficiently favorable military situations are not created in certain secondary theatres by beginning of autumn next year the governments of our Allies may be willing to continue through 1920 . . . I had a long interview with Marshal Foch on this subject today. He left me with the distinct understanding he would definitely inform our President of the definite efforts which we must make by next summer to give good hope

¹ *Ludendorff's Own Story*. Ludendorff, II, 326.

of ending the war by next winter. . . . If Marshal Foch should not submit a definite proposition my present opinion is that it would be wise for our government to force this issue at the next meeting of the Supreme War Council."¹

No sign came from the statesmen as to when the next meeting, now two weeks late, would take place. In this dispatch Bliss asked that the War Department cable him the requirements in shipping and Allied aid for the 80-division program.

Baker wrote to the President, August 17, that Bliss' cable "not only disturbs me but surprises me very much, because it seems to imply that General Bliss has not received the cablegram which I sent him August 5 containing full and detailed statements with regard to the subjects about which he inquires."

The reason for the interception of the cablegram remained a mystery.

Baker told the President that he considered the suggestion by Bliss "essentially wise. There must be a showdown on the subject." Bliss was bidden to take up the whole matter with the military advisers; and then it was decided that Baker himself should go to Europe to effect further coördination and to appeal for sufficient shipping to assure an American army strong enough to end the war in 1919.

Meanwhile favorable news, as ever, turned the Allied thought toward peace terms, each Ally seeking a favorable position to forward its own interests. Bliss' colleagues, reflecting the influence of their governments, were pressing political issues upon his attention. A British memorandum suggested that a group of diplomatic representatives should sit together to work out agreements on political questions the same as the soldiers counseled on military questions. It asked:

"What is the policy of the Allies with regard to Poland? Is it their object to reconstitute the old historic kingdom of Poland as it existed before the first partition? Have the Allies got any policy at all?"

And about Alsace-Lorraine? The Adriatic? Turkey? Russia? But Bliss was not at Versailles to be an arbiter of peace terms before the war was won. On August 22 he wrote to Baker:

¹ Cablegram, Bliss to Baker, Number 180.

"It cannot be denied that in certain of the campaigns in which our Allies are deeply interested, world-politics play an important part. I have already told you that it has been more or less openly said by prominent political and military men that they look to the United States to settle the Balkan question and my colleagues were inclined to shrug their shoulders when I showed them my number 66 of July 1st, from Washington which was to the general effect that the United States has no interest in the Macedonian question.

"Of course, when the peace-terms come to be discussed I suppose that questions relating to the Balkans will have to be considered by us, as well as other questions; but what people here are now interested in is getting the United States involved in these political questions for the purpose of enabling them better to shape their military campaigns. For their purpose, they want certain questions settled before peace comes, instead of after. . . .

"And that confirms me in the opinion which I have several times expressed to you that what concerns some of the Allies is not so much a political agreement as being a necessary basis for sound military strategy, as it is a pure and simple *political* agreement which they think can be arrived at only under enemy pressure and before the final victory.

"In other words, their apprehension increases the closer that victory comes without an antecedent political agreement having been reached as to what they will do *after* the war. Personally, I cannot see what military bearing a political agreement as to the future of Poland will have on the successful progress of a campaign to which the Allies are now devoting every possible effort. I cannot see the bearing a political agreement as to the future of Russia will have on the progress of the war except a possible unfortunate result from some such political agreement that would oblige the Allies to divert an increasing part of their strength from the western front. A political agreement as to the settlement of all European political questions after the war might have a bearing on the military conduct of the war; but an unsuccessful attempt at such an agreement might have an unfortunate effect; for example, it might be that, at the end, the Allies may be unwilling to grant to Italy all that was promised in the secret treaty of April 26, 1915, and if that fact should develop in an attempt to now reach a political agreement, it might seriously affect the attitude of Italy toward the war.

"As I have said to you before, I shall take no part in these political matters, knowing that my sole function is to give what help I can in the immediate problem of *beating the Germans*. Of course I cannot abdicate the functions of my mind; these questions are intensely interesting to anyone who is in the least concerned about the future of the world; but whilst I think about them and listen to discussions about them, I shall speak of them only in this personal way to you."

From August 8 to August 15 the British had taken 22,000 and the French 8,000 prisoners on their advances. By August 20 Mangin had taken 8,000 prisoners and 200 guns in his offensive toward the Ailette.¹ The next day it had been Haig's turn in a stubborn movement to flank Roye. Bliss did not know, Lloyd George could not have known that on August 13-14 Ludendorff in conferences at Spa had urged the Kaiser and his Chancellor to obtain peace on the best terms possible, but they had refused. If Lloyd George, who had made many venturesome suggestions, had known he would not have protested in alarm against Haig's rashness in continuing his offensive. The German army had fallen back before this to tactical positions only to recoil in powerful and successful counterblows on an over-extended and too ambitious antagonist.

Clemenceau could not have known, for Foch did not know, the apprehension in the German High Command. By August 26 Haig had taken 26,000 more prisoners in his new offensive, and it was on this day that Bliss had an interview with Foch—who had been made a Marshal for his successes—which, as time passes, will have a more curious place in history, although Foch overlooks it in his memoirs. This letter to Baker was written August 27:

"I do not want to dictate the following, and therefore I shall have to ask you to put up with a few lines of my handwriting.

"I told you in my letter of yesterday, by the Washington courier, that Marshal Foch had asked the Military Representatives to come to his headquarters that afternoon. The Supreme War Council had directed that, in consultation with the Marshal, we study and report on what seemed the desirable military policy to be followed on the entire western front in the autumn of this year and the spring and summer of next. The assumption is that the Allies would then determine whether they could and would do what might be recommended. Accordingly, each Military Representative (except the Italian), after full study by his Section, had submitted in writing, some ten days ago, his views to Marshal Foch.

"When we arrived the Marshal had these papers on his desk. He said that they were in substantial agreement with each other and with his own views, on essential points. The main point was that every effort must be made by the Allies to thoroughly and crushingly beat the Germans *on the western front in France next year*. This for various reasons, some of which I have already indicated to you.

¹ *History of the Great War*. Buchan. II, 325-328.

"Marshal Foch then made a statement that was somewhat disquieting to me. In the main it was

"a) That British and French divisions must be maintained at, at least, their present strength through next year, *at all costs*;

"b) That 100 American divisions must be in France by July 1, 1919;

"c) That tonnage must be provided at any sacrifice to enable the U. S. to do this.

"He constantly reiterated that it was *man-power* that he wanted; that he wanted as much artillery, tanks and aviation as he could get, but that it was 'man-power' and again 'man-power' that he wanted.

"In answer to my question he told me that he should make this declaration at the next session of the Supreme War Council. If he does this, the Allies will have the issue clean-cut for their decision. Can they do it? Will they do it?

"Marshal Foch holds these views in full light of the success he is now meeting in his present offensive against the Germans.

"I write this very hastily. You may get it before the Supreme War Council meets and will know what is in the air. General Pershing told me on Sunday that he was sure that the Marshal would make these demands. As he and the Marshal worked out the 100-division program together they may still be in accord as to its necessity. This I do not now know."

By August 29 the British had spread their advance north of Arras, and even the Belgians had moved out of their trenches for a gain.

But the continuance of the Allied offensive on the western front did not relegate Russia to the background. There had been a warm controversy between the French and British as to which should have the command of the land advance beyond Archangel, the French insisting upon a French general as an offset to a British admiral, and the British replying that there was a French commander at Salonika. Again Bliss acted as arbiter: the British retained the command. The Military Representatives had decided that General Poole should not advance beyond Archangel unless he was certain of support. Later Bliss reported:

"He had been told in his instructions not to go forward unless the Russians rose with him and he got in contact with the Czechs. The Russians had not volunteered and he had not got in contact with the Czechs." ¹

¹ Letter to March, September 3, 1918.

Trotsky, who had at first appeared at least disinterested, now turned hostile. Poole wanted to keep on with the offensive, and the British, in response, asked for more reinforcements.

"Having our foot in the door, the Allies will think that the whole body will follow. Nobody knows what the Czechs will do if they once unite. . . . In any event I do not see how we can do anything more in Russia even if we wanted to. . . . If our Allies have any axes to grind, let them go and do it. I think that the war has got to be ended on the western front, and I fully agree with you and Pershing."¹

Bliss saw signs again that we might be asked to send troops for the coming Macedonia offensive. He said that, in this case as in the others, we would be asked to put up the ante in the expectation that we would make the ante good.

The American Ambassador to Russia, David R. Francis, with other members of the diplomatic corps accredited to Petrograd, who were in exile at Archangel, united in an appeal "To the Russian people." After reading it Bliss wrote:

"In reference to this address it is to be hoped that the Russian people will not analyze it very carefully, because there are some things in it which are scarcely consistent. In it the Diplomatic Corps say 'We hold to the belief that all civilized people have the right themselves to determine their own form of government.' Immediately after they say 'We will never recommend to our Governments the recognition of any Russian Government which has not a national character, which disregards Russia's solemn bonds of alliance and which observes the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty.' Suppose a Russian Government is formed which has a national character, but which also disregards the obligations of the Alliance and which observes the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty; if we do not recognize it, what becomes of our declaration as to the right of civilized peoples to determine their own form of Government? I doubt if it would be possible to form in Russia any government whatever, with the consent of its people, which would recognize the obligations of the alliance entered into by the Czar. The declaration of the Diplomatic Corps in their manifesto to the Russian people is almost equivalent to a statement that we will recognize no government except that of the Czar."²

Ambassador Francis said General Poole had word that he was to receive 10,000 American reinforcements and it was vital they should be sent at once. Bliss wrote to March:

¹ Letter to March, September 3, 1918.

² Letter to March, September 14, 1918.

"It begins to look to me as though the explanation is that the diplomatic mission at Archangel is afraid of being captured by a German-Bolshevik advance, because if they do not get out of Archangel before the port freezes up in November they cannot get out before next summer."

Bliss informed the Military Representatives definitely that the United States could commit itself to no further effort in Russia and Siberia without further endangering the 80-division program for the western front.¹

The incident of northern Russia was closed on September 27 when Bliss received this cablegram:

"The President is today informing all Allied nations that he will send no more troops to northern ports in Russia." ²

General Poole's force and the diplomats who remained at Archangel were frozen in for the winter, while the Siberian expedition in its adventurous career, which General Graves has so interestingly described in his book, was to go as far as Irkutsk.

On September 12 Pershing in the first offensive under American command, with the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Twenty-sixth, Thirty-fifth, Forty-second, Eightieth and Ninetieth American Divisions, closed the St. Mihiel salient, taking 16,000 prisoners and 470 guns. He began mobilizing for the Meuse-Argonne. Harbord, whom he had taken from the command of the Second Division to meet the crisis in the Service of Supply, which was dangerously short of material, was able to speed it up to meet the unexpectedly heavy demands when so large an offensive had not been anticipated until 1919.

Foch still pressed for the hundred American divisions. The Allies had cut out salients, they were making steady headway, but Ludendorff, as we know, had recovered confidence in his legions who were making a stubborn and skilful retreat. Foch, who had reason to respect German tactics, which he had studied and practiced, was fully aware the Germans might be biding their time for a counter blow. Beyond this possibility, which became slighter every day, as they yielded prisoners, material and strategic positions, was the danger

¹ Minutes of the 46th meeting of the Military Representatives, September 14, 1918.

² Cablegram Number 129, March to Bliss, September 28, 1918.

that they might be able to reform on the shorter Antwerp-Meuse-Strassbourg line for prolonged defense.

On September 26 Pershing began the wicked business of striking up hill toward the German line of retreat, which Ludendorff must hold to prevent a grave disaster. Pershing, himself, still called for the hundred divisions.¹ His would be the heavy task in 1919 and he had reason to consider, in face of the prestige of the German army, that he was only at the outset of the Wilderness on the way to Appomattox.

The British, with the American Twenty-sixth and Thirtieth Divisions assisting, September 26—29, conquered the Hindenburg line. Rheims was free, Pershing had Montfaucon, the British, repeating offensive blow on blow with the same stubbornness that they had stonewalled against German offensives, recovered Cambrai and St. Quentin. The blaze of their fire swept steadily on toward the French frontier. The offensives in Macedonia and Turkey brought further welcome news of successes.

On September 29 the German Supreme Command asked the German government to request an immediate armistice and the acceptance of Wilson's Fourteen Points.² Five days later, October 3:

"The Supreme Command insists on the demand of Sunday, 29th September, that a peace offer to our enemies be issued at once. The German army still stands firm, and successfully wards off all attacks. But the situation daily becomes more critical and may force the Supreme Command to make momentous decisions. . . . Every day wasted costs thousands of brave men's lives." ³

Foch did not know of the secret councils of the German Supreme Command, but he did know that Prince Max von Baden, a liberal, had become Chancellor as evidence of a political crisis in Germany. When Foch met Baker on October 3, he told him that he did not require a hundred American divisions. The 2,000,000 Americans who would be in France before the end of the month would be enough.⁴

When the German arch of the Quadruple Alliance on the western

¹ *Newton D. Baker: America at War*. Palmer. II, 346.

² *Amtliche Urkunden*, Number 13.

³ *Amtliche Urkunden*, Number 33.

⁴ *Newton D. Baker: America at War*. Palmer. II, 348.

front began cracking, this gave heart to all the Allies large and small and took the heart out of Germany's allies. The sweep of the Macedonian offensive concluded in the capitulation of Bulgaria, September 29. Without waiting on American reinforcements the Italians began their advance against the breaking Austrians and joined the race for victory, while the remnants of the Turkish army fell back before Allenby's intrepid campaign. The end of the war had come as swiftly as its beginning. Germany had sought the showdown in 1918 and it had come.

As the curtain fell Pershing's grim hammering, with divisions only a few weeks overseas fighting beside his veteran divisions—the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Twenty-sixth, Twenty-eighth, Thirty-second, Thirty-third, Thirty-fifth, Thirty-seventh, Forty-second, Seventy-seventh, Seventy-eighth, Seventy-ninth, Eightieth, Eighty-second, Eighty-ninth, Ninetieth, Ninety-first and Ninety-second—had reached the edge of Sedan, stormed the heights on the way to his objective, and he had another army forming for the thrust toward Metz.

For weeks political considerations had been predominant among Bliss' colleagues. The prime ministers did not appear for another meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles. They met in Paris October 7, with their foreign ministers, without an American present.

Baker started for home free from further worry about how to get shipping for eighty divisions to win the war in 1919. That unassuming gifted executive had given a marvelous example of statesmanship in the teamplay he had developed in the military leadership of Pershing, Bliss and March; in the teamplay in all our chargers, military, industrial and political, pulling their weight on the main road to the goal on the western front. And Bliss, that veteran public servant, had been as completely objective and impersonal as Baker. There was a characteristic touch in these lines in a letter he wrote to March, September 18:

"From there I went up to General Pershing's Field Headquarters and found him, naturally enough, up to his ears in work. He kindly insisted on my staying to lunch with him, but I told him I had too much sense to waste the time of a man when he was fighting a battle."

It did not occur to him that in a sense, aside from what he had done to get them in France in time, Pershing's soldiers were his own in that he had fathered them in the formative days when he was Chief of Staff.

XXXII

PEACE OR MORE MILITARISM?

Bliss' rejoicing was tempered in the hour of military triumph. The completion of one task in sight, his mind turned to a future task in which, as a soldier, he anticipated that he could have little part. Failure by the nations to achieve unity in peace meant that his labors in war had been a failure.

"It is true that we, that this generation, can feel only a subdued happiness, even now. Not until our children's time can the former joy of life come into the world. And it can come then only if our culminating work makes it impossible for them ever to see another such a war."¹

It seems in order to make the above quotation from a talk he made three weeks after the armistice, lest his early attitude about terms for the Germans should be misunderstood. He was ill in bed with "the grippe or a very bad cold"—anyhow, he found it "bone-wracking"—when Clemenceau sent word to him asking his view as to armistice terms. He replied that he was for unconditional surrender, pending other instructions from Washington.²

At the secret meeting, October 7, in Paris, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando, with their foreign ministers, had drawn up terms which required the evacuation of all Allied territory held by the enemy and the end of submarine warfare; and on October 8 the Military Representatives acting as a committee, and not in their official capacity in relation to the Supreme War Council, had elaborated the terms in military detail in counsel with naval experts. Bliss' doctor would not permit him to attend this meeting. So he was represented by members of his staff as listeners.

In the afternoon the French Military Representative brought to Bliss a copy of the "joint opinion" of the other Representatives and said the prime ministers wanted him to sign it by three o'clock. He

¹ Remarks at a dinner given by the American Section of the Supreme War Council to its colleagues, December 2, 1918.

² Colonel William B. Wallace to the author.

refused to sign it without instructions from his government and sent a copy of the joint opinion by cable to Washington with his statement that his government had been in no wise committed to it. If he had signed it, of course, this would have been a card in the hands of the statesmen who were already shying away from President Wilson's Fourteen Points. On the next day, October 9, Bliss wrote a long and a great letter to Baker, who was on the way home. In this he referred to this incident more at length and then rose to prophetic vision.

"I had taken note of the fact announced in the daily journals that a proposal had been made direct from Germany to the government of the United States. I did not know to what extent, if any, that government was conferring on the subject with its European associates in the war. I had to assume that, even if such had been the case, no definite common agreement had been arrived at; else, why should the three Prime Ministers take this matter up by themselves? It is evident that they were not acting as members of the Supreme War Council of which the President of the United States is the fourth member.

"The document which they presented to me, as well as to the other military representatives, was prepared at a 'Conference of Ministers at a Meeting,' etc. It was not merely a conference of *Prime* Ministers but one in which other ministers of the respective governments took part. It was not acted on by the Military Representatives at Versailles in their capacity as Military Representatives on the Supreme War Council, but was acted upon by what was in reality a committee of those representatives together with certain naval representatives who have no connection whatever with the Supreme War Council. . . .

"Of course it may be that Germany feels beaten to such a degree that she will accept such conditions as a precedent to an armistice, but I doubt it. Of course it is not an armistice in the ordinary sense of the word. It looks to me as though it were intended to say, 'We will not treat with you on the terms of President Wilson's fourteen propositions or on any other terms. Surrender, and we will then do as we please.' It looks to me as though it were intended to say to the United States that these are the conditions which the United States must inform Germany are the necessary precedent to considering any proposition for an armistice."

At this time, October 9, the British had not yet taken Lille, Pershing had been temporarily stalled against the Romagne and Meuse heights, the Germans were making stubborn resistance on the western front and the Italian offensive was only in its first incon-

clusive stage. Moreover, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando knew that America was committed, by her huge army in France, to see the war through and that the reports of heavy American casualties in the Meuse-Argonne and the war strain on our people had brought us into the indomitable and uncompromising stage of emotion known to experts in military psychology as "war hate." Bliss continued:

"I myself believe that the laying down of arms by Germany is a necessary precedent to any conversation with her. Whether it is wise to impose such other conditions as may make it impossible for her to lay down her arms, even though by her doing so she puts herself in such a position that we can demand from her all of our war aims, I leave it for others to decide."

And then, while all the world looked eagerly for each communiqué to see how far the Allied pins had advanced on the map since the previous one, he opened his heart to Baker on the future of the world and the proposed League of Nations.

"Judging from the spirit which seems more and more to animate our European Allies, I am beginning to despair that the war will accomplish much more than the abolition of *German* militarism while leaving *European* militarism as rampant as ever. I am one of those who believe that the absolute destruction of all militarism, under any of its evil forms, is the only corner stone of the foundation of any League. (I like better the French term *Société* of nations.) I think that the present war will prove a doubly hideous crime if it does not result in *something* that will make another such war, or anything faintly approaching it, an impossibility for a hundred years to come. I look no further than that, because if the world, the civilized world, can be made to stop fighting for a hundred years there is some hope that it may stop fighting forever.

"What is that 'something'? There are some who say that it is the destruction of Prussian militarism; others, that it is a League of Nations. There are few, so far as I can find here, who lay stress on the Fourth (I think it is the fourth, but I have not the document by me) of President Wilson's declaration of fourteen war aims—the limitation of armaments to the necessities for the maintenance of internal order. Yet I think that that fourth declaration will be found to be the very essence, the health-giving principle, of any attempted remedy for the cure of this war-sick world and without which the remedy will prove nothing but well-meant quackery. It will be an attempt to cure an ulcer without purifying the poisoned blood.

"In looking to the future peace of the world it is a mistake, I think, to

lay so much stress on Prussian militarism. It may soothe our guilty souls by doing so, by saying that 'Prussia did it first.' That kind of plea was first made in the Garden of Eden, and it no more clears our skirts of sin today than it did then. Looking to the future, the curse of the world today is *European* militarism. Prussia, or rather a Prussianized Germany, has given us a present exhibition of what this curse can be; but it is a German ulcer on the European body growing out of the rotten European blood. And for practical purposes, for the purposes of the scientific physician, it makes no difference that it was Prussia that introduced into the European system the evil, blood-putrifying germ. It is there, in the blood of all Europe, and it must be gotten out.

"And, that what I have said is in the back of the head of the average American at the plough-tail, at the counting office desk, at the throttle of a million engines, would, I believe, appear if you were to announce that our main war aim is to destroy German militarism. I believe they would say, We are in this war to destroy MILITARISM—not merely militarism camouflaged as German or French or Russian, or under any other of its evil aspects. We want to guarantee ourselves against the necessity of having to take up that burden under which Europe, and not Germany alone, has been staggering.

"What guarantee have we that if we crush one giant out of a dozen some one of the others may not acquire his powers, and with his powers his spirit, and use his giant's strength like a giant? If we take his revolver away from one man on Pennsylvania Avenue or Broadway because he has misused it and leave theirs in the hands of 99 other men, what guarantee have we that one of these, by himself or in combination with others, may not misuse his revolver? After having determined that none of them *needs* a revolver we will take it away from all of them; and unwillingness of any one to submit will be an evidence of his intent to misuse it.

"And when the time comes for cold-blooded international politicians to sit around a table to consider the future condition of the world it is possible that we will see some unexpected developments if their discussions are not to be conducted on the basic fact that all militarism in its present development is definitely a thing of the past.

"There has been, as it seems to me, a curious revival of French ambitions. France has a growing desire for possessions in the East or Near East; and the ultimate disposition of German colonial territory is as much a subject of anxious thought with her as it is with England and Japan and even Italy. She looks to a reconstituted Russia under a government that will make her what she was before. This may be a dream; but dreams sometimes come true—especially with sufficient time. And world-politicians look a long way ahead. But with Germany reduced to a military nullity and every other nation militarized or navalized or both, who is to stand between her and a reconstituted Russia? Who can she play off

against England in disputes, backed by force of arms, about over-sea possessions? What reason have we in history for believing that if world conditions continue as they have been, except that Germany will have been reduced to military helplessness, the alliances and ententes which have grown out of fear of Germany's overweening strength will not dissolve and that other alliances will not grow out of other fears and with like results? Countless questions will arise which never would arise if this war could end with the abolition of military power in a form that can be directed readily and quickly by one nation against another.

"But, it is when we come to consider the *practicability* of a League of Nations, that is to say a League for Peace, that a radical change in existing world conditions, as respects world-militarism becomes especially evident. What can be more inconsistent, even absurd, than to imagine a League of Nations for the maintenance of peace composed of nations all armed to the teeth—against whom?—against each other? That cannot give the slightest guarantee of peace. That will not relieve the world of its present intolerable burden. And what do we want such a League for unless it be to relieve us from this burden?

"Suppose such a League had been formed five or six years ago. Germany and Austria would have been members of it. What would prevent them from saying, just as they did say to each other,

"We want certain things that the League will not let us have. We, together, are stronger than they; we have more and better trained soldiers, better weapons, and a greater accumulation of military stores than they. We can whip the League, we can whip the world; let us do it."

"Suppose as a result of this war, that Germany is reduced to military powerlessness for a generation to come while other world conditions remain unchanged; what guarantee have you that some other nation, or combination of them, may not do what Germany and Austria have done? What agreement, what form of constitution or articles of federation can be made by the nations of a League that will prevent this? Have constitutions prevented rebellions? Have articles of confederation prevented secessions?

"But, you will say, our war aims look to the prevention of larger military establishments than are necessary to maintain internal order. *Rem acu tetigisti!* I come back to what I said before, that the realization of the President's declaration as to the reduction of armaments is absolutely vital to any proposition for the destruction of militarism and the effective creation of a League of Nations.

"It seems, off-hand, a declaration easy to realize; but it is not. We have to hammer the idea into the minds of the world while the common peoples are in a receptive mood for it, or the governments of the world will defeat it. It is now, while the prestige and influence of the United States is predominant, that we should do this. The peoples just now are sick of the whole thing. I do not mean, of course, that they want to stop, because

they realize the necessity of going to the end. But they are sick of the conditions that cause this necessity. Now is the time to hold out hope for the future and to create a popular sentiment that will dominate the Congress that is to adjust affairs after the war."

On October 20 Chancellor von Baden replied to President Wilson, saying Germany was ready to accept an armistice as arranged by the military chiefs of both sides, but trusting the President to approve of no arrangement "irreconcilable with the honor of the German people." Pulses beating higher with each cheering communiqué from the front, the statesmen of the Allies, with all manner of selfish interests besetting them, continued to ponder how best to exploit the victory which now seemed to be within their grasp, while Bliss was isolated from their political counsels and without instructions from his government as its lone representative in the matter of armistice terms. But his ears were open and, as he had previously said, he had not abdicated the functions of his mind. He wrote to Baker, October 23, in order to have his letter taken by the weekly courier who was going that day:

"I wish to God that the President himself could be here for a week.¹ I hear in all quarters a longing for this. The people who want to get a rational solution out of this awful mess look to him alone. I have already told you that I have heard it repeatedly said that he alone can settle in any permanent way the Balkan questions. I have even heard my British colleagues say that they believe the only solution will be an American protectorate there. In this dark storm of angry passion that has been let loose in all quarters I doubt if any one but he can let in the light of reason. It will be *ex Occidente lux*, and not *ex Oriente lux*.

"I hope to get off a telegram today, as I promised in my cable to you last night. I have begun it and torn it up several times. It is a perplexing question to handle, at this stage, in writing. My views are, I think, pretty well understood here by *inference* although not by direct statements on my part. There are so few people with whom one can reason and state views without leading to an outbreak of passion.

"I think that the English are by far the most reasonable and that it is

¹ His later view of the changed conditions led to a change of mind. Ralph Hayes wrote to Baker, November 18: "The announcement of the President's visit has raised various emotions here. Keppel thinks that Jove should not come down from Olympus. Bliss believes that the problems of the green table will have been so much preadjudicated and predetermined, or will require so very much time for their solution, that the President's presence at some or all the actual conferences will not maximize his influence. The feeling is quite general. I believe that if he does come he ought not to stay too long."

with them that our government can most probably come to an agreement as to what is right and just for the present and which will tend to the future peace of the world. The trouble is that the military element is on top, and if they are allowed to work their will they will do that which, if done by Germany, would shock the sense of justice of the world. And the worst of it is that what they would do would lead to a perpetuation of armaments and the standing threat of war.

"When I send my telegram you will note that I do not believe that, in this peculiar case, the question of conditions of a so-called armistice should be left to the military men *alone*. The trouble is that it is not an armistice. It is an absolute surrender that we must have. But in order to get that surrender the conditions which are to follow it should be determined in advance and made known.

"All of the military propositions for an armistice that I have seen plainly embody or point to the political conditions which will exist after the so-called armistice is agreed to. These political conditions, imposed in the armistice, will be doubtless demanded by the political people in the discussion of final terms. At the same time, these political conditions imposed by military men alone may be such as to keep the world in turmoil for many years to come.

"If the President's idea of rational disarmament can only be realized it will simplify the whole problem. If all the nations will disarm to the extent that they properly can, there will be no necessity of taking away this or that, or the other part, of the defeated nation merely for the purpose of rendering it militarily weak. An international sense of justice can readily agree on taking away of such territory as does not justly belong to that nation whether it is armed or disarmed.

"But no two men think alike, apparently, about these things. Everything is drifting. The military party is demanding more and more with every day's success. There is nobody to impose any check. There is no free speech here and no free press in our sense of the word. I think that the time is ripe for our government to immediately take the lead; to recognize that there are certain things that it is right and just and conducive to future peace to demand now; to recognize that there are other questions which can only be settled by the prolonged and earnest consideration and discussion of honest, reasonable, intelligent and just persons.

"If in this bewildering darkness a way can be pointed out and accepted by all, which will put a stop to the fighting under such conditions that it cannot be resumed I believe that Germany, still with a formidable army at her disposal, will agree to rational disarmament. Then there will be hope that all will disarm. But if certain elements of the military party have their way I fear that the rest of Europe will have to remain armed for an indefinite time in order to keep Germany in the position in which it is desired to put her and in order to defend their own spoils against each other.

"In my opinion the time has come for the United States to act swiftly and determinedly. I think that it should formulate its own views of what is right, right not only now but also for all time to come, and boldly put these up to its associates as a basis for their own agreement. In these, I think, should be included the doctrine of rational disarmament. I doubt if the governments are ripe for this but I believe that the common people are. And I think that the governments, knowing this, will listen to reason."

The talk of peace might not be allowed to delay the preparations of the Military Representatives to continue the war indefinitely. They were still laboring over the terms of an agreement for pooling the horses of the three Allied armies in France; and also working out the details of an Inter-Allied aerial bombing force, to which Bliss refers in a tone in keeping with the remainder of his letter, for which it is a fitting climax. He enclosed a document from his French colleague on the subject.

"Please note paragraph I, which states that the object of this aerial force is to carry the war into Germany by attacking its industry, its commerce and its *population*. You will note that there is not a word to indicate that this proposed use of the aerial force is by way of reprisal. When, in some future year, the document is withdrawn from the archives of some state department, it will look as though the governments which drew it up regarded bombing attacks upon *populations, as such*, to be a perfectly legitimate object of warfare. Even the Germans have maintained that their bombing raids on London, Paris and other centers of population have been made only because those places were the centers of all kinds of war industries, or that they were places where large numbers of troops were concentrated, and they claim that those industries or troops are the objects of their raids and that injury to populations is incidental. But the document herewith makes the *population per se* to be the object of attack."

House was on his way to France as the Special Representative of the United States in Europe and the President's personal representative on the Supreme War Council and "in all conferences." Bliss met him the morning of October 25 at Brest, and gave him a copy of his cable to Washington stating his own views of the armistice terms.

"At the same time I informed him that the representatives of the Allies were then assembled in Paris to arrange the terms of the armistice," Bliss said in his final official report. In a letter to Baker he referred to this as "a town meeting to discuss matters on which

the peace of the world for a long time to come will depend."

At the end of his first day in Paris, House noted in his diary that he did not know how he had ever got through it.¹ He had gone into immediate secret conference with Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando as a steering committee on policy. Bliss wrote:

"I had a conference on the morning of October 27 with Mr. House at his residence at which he discussed with me the views of the Commanders-in-Chief of the national armies and of the Inter-Allied Commander-in-Chief in regard to the armistice. I then learned that none of them demanded what I believed to be necessary, a complete disarmament of the land and naval forces of Germany, leaving her, however, enough of her home guard troops to preserve order. . . . If we could obtain disarmament and demobilization, we would be in a position to take any measures that common justice suggested and to obtain every one of our war aims." ²

On October 28 Foch summoned Haig, Pétain and Pershing in council, which he began by saying "the terms should be such as to render Germany powerless to recommence operations in case hostilities are resumed." The British and American armies had borne more than the main brunt of the fighting since the Allied offensives had begun. Haig's losses had been heavy, his reserves were being exhausted in his repeated attacks. With winter approaching, he favored terms which the Germans would accept, but he would insist that the German army, after surrendering a quantity of material, fall back to the Rhine. Pershing says that Pétain's views as well as his own were more "stringent." ³

On the same day House asked Bliss to frame terms, which he did in a memorandum, elaborating them as stated in his cable to Washington five days before:

"a) A complete surrender of the beaten party, under such conditions as will guarantee against any possible resumption of hostilities by it;

"b) A conference to determine and enforce the conditions of peace with the beaten party; and

"c) A conference (perhaps the same one as above) to determine and enforce such changes in world conditions—incidental to the war but not necessarily forming part of the terms of peace—as are agreed upon as vital

¹ *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*. Seymour. II, 92.

² Bliss' final official report to the Secretary of State, February 6, 1920.

³ *My Experiences in the World War*. Pershing. II, 359-63.

for the orderly progress of civilization and the continued peace of the world.

"These phases should be kept separate and distinct. The conditions accompanying one should not and need not be confused with those of another.

"It is for the military men to recommend the military conditions under which hostilities may cease so that the political governments may begin to talk, without fear of interruption by the resumption of hostilities."

His reasoning, which looked ahead to "the orderly progress of civilization and the continued peace of the world," was very simple. The Germans still had a great army, with an unknown amount of arms and munitions. They might be playing for time and resume fighting. This danger would hold the Allied armies in position indefinitely. It might mean much further bloodshed leading to still worse chaos in the end.

"If we secure partial disarmament accompanied by the other conditions proposed, and it does not prevent subsequent resumption of hostilities, then we have failed of our purpose. If the enemy refuses complete disarmament and demobilization, it will be an evidence of his intention not to act in good faith."

Bliss would have good faith on both sides as the basis for the future. Unconditional surrender, immediate action to see that disarmament was carried out and a prompt framing of peace terms would insure immediate security and demobilization of the armies.

"Two days later while I was waiting to see Mr. House at his house, where a meeting of the Prime Ministers was being held, he came out from the council chamber and handed me my memorandum stating that the Council had decided against the proposition for absolute and complete disarmament and demobilization of the enemy forces."¹

On the same day, October 30, Pershing repeated by cable his letter to the Supreme War Council favoring unconditional surrender. On November 1 Bliss received this cable from Baker:

"I have not been sending you information or instructions because Colonel House has his entire communication with the President and you are doubtless conferring with him fully. General Pershing has just sent

¹ Bliss' final official report to the Secretary of State, February 6, 1920.

me a copy of a letter sent by him October 30 to the Supreme War Council. The letter was not previously submitted to the President and you will rely on Colonel House's views in such matters. Cable me freely your own views if you desire any points especially considered by the President."

Bliss' views were unacceptable; the forming of the armistice terms left to House and his three colleagues, and to be confirmed by the four sessions of the Armistice Commission, October 31–November 4, which had some resemblance to a political convention for which the slate had already been made by the bosses.

Foch opened with a statement of the military situation. Since July 18 the enemy had lost 260–280,000 prisoners, 4,000–4,500 guns. The enemy was in retreat but accepting battle, with the Allied soldiers confident of their mastery over the enemy. The Italians had taken Mount Grappa; Bulgaria had been overwhelmed, the Turkish army destroyed; the *liaison* between the Central Empires and southern Russia had been cut. "We can continue if the enemy desires it to his complete defeat."¹

Familiar faces of the past meetings in days of stress and alarm were there in this hour when triumph was still touched with uncertainty: Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Orlando; Balfour, Pichon, Sonnino; Foch, Weygand, Sir Henry Wilson; Vesnetch, Serbian minister in Paris; Venizelos for Greece; and in later meetings, Hymans for Belgium; Rodriguez, Portuguese minister in Paris, and Matsui, Japanese minister in Paris—while other emissaries of the Allies were hurrying to Paris or knocking at the door in order that they, too, might let their claims be known. Inevitably, humanly, nationally, with the sun of victory brightening the landscape for distant vision, the Englishman was thinking of his empire, of Mesopotamia as well as India; the Frenchman of the Rhine again as a French river, and forever to hold Strassbourg as his own, and of Syria; the Italian of Trieste, of Fiume and the Adriatic as forever an Italian lake; the Serb of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a great Yugo-Slav nation and Fiume its port; the Greek as far as Constantinople—while on the horizon appeared the frantically gesturing hands of subject peoples who sought nationhood.

¹ *Procès-verbal* of the First Meeting of the Supreme War Council on the Armistice, October 31, 1918.

It was hardly to be expected that Foch should not in turn think again as a Frenchman rather than as generalissimo of the whole; at least, that the high peace aims of a distant President should be as close to his heart as the hundred divisions from America had been a month ago. There were even murmurs in British and American army staff circles that he had given the highest credit to the valor of his Allies by assigning their troops for the main attacks since July.

Bliss had been silent at the meetings of the Armistice Commission where House had put in his word against overloading the terms with political demands. It is clear that Bliss understood how Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando were deftly slipping the Fourteen Points into the discard. He understood their position as national leaders who sought national compensation for national sacrifices and loss of blood and money.

He wrote that "to those who were in daily association with the political and military leaders then assembled in Paris the reason for not risking an ultimatum for unconditional surrender and complete disarmament was obvious." They could recall how when the Germans were withdrawing from the Marne or to the Hindenburg line, or, before the Rumanian offensive, losing prisoners and guns, this gave the impression that they were hopelessly beaten. They could not realize that now the Germans were really beaten. "The Germans were wearing paper shoes, paper clothing, eating substitutes for food that an American farmer would throw to the pigs," Bliss wrote. Yet, as Bliss remarks, the Allies were talking about the dumping of German articles manufactured and stored during the war upon the markets of the world when the war was over. But Bliss did not forget that the Allied statesmen "had behind them peoples cold, hungry, every household in mourning, dazed and stupefied by the incredible losses already incurred." Excluding the United States, 35,000,000 men had been mobilized, nearly 5,000,000 killed, while 5,000,000 were prisoners or missing. Bliss mentions another influence in the minds of the Allied leaders of Europe, which rarely occurs to Americans, and which he considered to be a potent factor:

"Rumors of appeals from the German government to that of the United States were rife. The moment was provocative of suspicion. There were some who did not know how such an appeal could be made or enter-

tained without the possibility of a separate peace or, at best, of such an action as would reduce the European Allies to playing second part in making a general peace.”¹

When Foch crossed the front line with the armistice terms, which he had so largely dictated, a week had passed since Austria capitulated in an armistice, and it was known that Germany could hope for no winter food supplies from the Ukraine. The Kaiser was in flight to Holland. The armistice was to last for thirty-six days, when a new arrangement must be made.

On November 10, while the Allied leaders awaited the return of Foch from his meeting with the German delegates, Bliss wrote to Baker:

“Strange to say, Marshal Foch in a private meeting of the Ministers, notwithstanding his public utterances, took the ground that the German army was not beaten and that my proposition of complete disarmament was less likely to be accepted by that army than was his own proposition. . . .

“I have repeatedly told Mr. House that I think that the Allies are playing with fire, but they won’t realize it until their fingers, including ours, are well burned. They wasted invaluable time in determining on the conditions of the armistice, while every day might be bringing them nearer the moment when they would find no German government to deal with, and then—what?

“The political leaders here have been unanimous in their feeling of dread of a Bolshevik revolution in Germany; but it seems to me that they have done and are permitting the military to do everything that makes such a revolution possible.

“But, as M. Clemenceau said in the note which I translated last night for Mr. House, everything that is now happening is bringing us face to face with the unknown. It is useless to speculate about it. The time limit with Germany expires about 11 o’clock tomorrow morning. I hope that today we may know a little more clearly what confronts us.”

At eleven o’clock the morning of November 11 came that strange numbing silence—the silence that could be heard—as the armies ceased firing. The German delegates had signed the Foch terms providing for the surrender or internment of their naval vessels, the surrender of a large quantity of guns and material by their army, and its retreat to the east of the Rhine, thus committing an Ameri-

¹ Bliss’ final official report to the Secretary of State, February 6, 1920.

can force to a long term of service in the occupied territory. With the Kaiser, the supreme war lord, in flight from revolution and an army that could no longer protect him, we know now that the Germans would have accepted unconditional surrender. President Wilson sent his message to House saying, "autocracy is dead." Orlando of the Italy of that day might have shared the President's conviction.

Now imagination tempts the biographer to draw a picture of an armistice conference which sounds back to Grant and Lee at Appomattox at the end of the War Between the States, when Northern valor, superior numbers and resources overcame Southern valor, inferior numbers and resources, and Grant told Lee, as we have been taught to believe, that his men were to take their horses home for the spring plowing. The Northern and Southern soldiers, who had learned their mutual worth in battle, held little enmity against each other, although later they became subject to the hates in the rear, which were then seemingly as implacable as those between the Allies and the Germans. If the peoples of both North and South could have been imbued with the spirit of Grant and Lee at the time of the surrender, they might have been spared the shame of carpet-bag rule, the delay in reconstruction and the prolonged and humanly warranted bitterness of the South.

Accepting a precedent from American history—a likeness which will be distasteful to many Americans who will say that the war of 1861–65 was one between brothers of the same nation and not against a foreign nation—let us suppose that Bliss had met Hindenburg between the lines soldier to soldier and man to man after the capitulation of Austria and the flight of the Kaiser.¹ We can imagine them exchanging professional compliments, as do parliamentarians, or lawyers before a joust, and as do scholars, business competitors, and the gentlest of pacifists and the narrowest of militarists.

"I heard Marshal Foch say that your retreat was 'magnificently

¹ This was written in August, 1934, at a time when the world was horrified over Hitler's absolute dictatorship in Germany. But, preceding his rise to power as the protagonist of militaristic nationalism and racial frenzy, there had been a period since the war when world feeling had become quite sympathetic, even cordial, toward the German people. In another ten years, old antipathies, now softened to form an alliance against him, may be renewed and another new set of alliances formed.

conducted.’¹ He studied German tactics and your soldiers studied Napoleon’s tactics after Napoleon overran your country.”

“The Americans have surprised us by their numbers and the vigor of their action.”

“I have neighbors and friends of German blood at home.”

“So you know they do not cut off babies’ hands in wanton cruelty, as your propagandists picture us.”

“You are beaten, bravely though you have fought with the world against you.”

“Yes, we want peace, but we can still fight. Your President once spoke of peace without victory and no quarrel with the German people. Later he said we were so dishonorable there was no dealing with us.”

“The heat of passion! We have all been guilty of it. You must disarm. All the nations will give up heavy arming. You must pay indemnities within your power, yield self-rule to the people you have held subject, as Napoleon had to yield it. Then your people, all people, must get back to work promptly.”

But why go on? Without putting words into Bliss’ mouth—when he was so capable with his own—this does not seem to stretch plausibility on the part of a man whose salient characteristic was that he could not hate his fellow human beings. The same Bliss could say in his final official report that his armistice plan might have been wrong—Who could tell? But he held to it in thorough conviction.

¹ A quotation from an article by Bliss in *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1929.

XXXIII

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITY

ON the afternoon of November 30 when Bliss was calling on House, who was just out of bed from an attack of grippe, he learned to his amazement, as he expressed it to March, that he had been appointed one of the American Peace Commissioners.

"It is a great honor and at the same time a tremendous responsibility. The American Section of the Peace Conference has a bitter struggle ahead of it to accomplish any of the important purposes of the President. Thus far we have been handicapped by the lack of proper and sufficient political and diplomatic assistance. For example, in the sessions of the Inter-Allied Conference on the armistices with Austria-Hungary and with Germany, Mr. House sat at the table without a single adviser except his military and naval ones. Directly opposite him sat Mr. Lloyd George who was supported by Lord Reading, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Balfour and Lord Milner. In the same way M. Clemenceau and Sr. Orlando were supported by their political and diplomatic advisers."¹

He wrote to Mrs. Bliss saying, "If you have ever prayed for me, do so now, because it is scarcely too much to say that the future of the world depends upon this peace. . . . I am apprehensive but I live in hope."

Later it became known that Bliss owed his appointment to Baker. Immediately after the armistice the President had asked Baker to be one of the American Peace Commissioners; but with Secretary of State Robert Lansing going to Paris and William G. McAdoo resigning as Secretary of the Treasury, Baker thought it was better not to have two Cabinet members as well as the President abroad and that he remain at home to look after the demobilization of the army and thus finish the task he had begun. He suggested Bliss in his place.²

Bliss wrote to Baker, December 9:

¹ Letter to March, December 1, 1918.

² *Newton D. Baker: America at War*. Palmer II, 392.

"The work here will not be done by one group of individuals, but by groups of individuals each of which represents the views and interests of a particular nation. It goes without saying that the other groups will be each a unit and the full strength of the national interest for each of the representatives will be brought to bear on the result. It *must* be so with the American representation. And it is not merely national interests that these groups represent, still less partisan interests in the respective countries. We are going to vote the proxies of millions of dead men who have died in the hope and belief that what we do now will make it impossible for the same awful sacrifice to be demanded of their children. But, unfortunately, the greater part of these millions of proxies are in the hands of nations that do not seem disposed to think much of the interests of the coming generation and who do not care much for the most important of the ideals that inspired Americans when they came into the war. Our only chance is for the United States to stand a unit for its ideals and if necessary to appeal to the fathers and brothers and sons of those millions of dead men and bring the common people of the world to our side."

His ingrained sense of prevision, which had started on a sound basis in preparing an army to win the war, now centered on a victory for peace. He wrote to Lansing, December 26:

"I assume that the delegations of other important nations to the Peace Conference will act as units in the discussions and votes of the Conference. Certainly, the only hope that the American delegation will have in securing the war aims of its country lies in its following the French motto and being 'one and indivisible.'"

"May I ask what steps we are going to take in order to secure this unanimity of understanding?"

"I have no doubt that the moment the Peace Conference assembles the question of terms with Germany will be taken up. The Allies, for example, know exactly what they are going to ask in the way of territorial cessions. Their demands will be immediately accompanied by their reasons and arguments. Are we agreed that the Alsace-Lorraine of 1871 shall be ceded? or, the Alsace-Lorraine of 1814? or, Alsace-Lorraine extended by an economic boundary? or, Alsace-Lorraine with the boundaries of Marshal Foch? Are we agreed on a principle with which we will meet a demand for the cession of the entire left bank? How are we going to get the President's views or instructions on such questions?"

"These and many other questions stare us in the face, some as being certain to be presented to us immediately on the opening of the Peace Conference and the others following in due time. Is there no way by which we can begin to formulate these questions now and come to a common and cordial understanding as to the attitude that we are going

to take? Of course when we hear all arguments we may change our mind on various points, but we must start out with the idea of changing the minds of others to coincide with ours, which is exactly what they will do with respect to us.

"Soon after the other delegations arrive, we will be lunching and dining with individual members of them and, if we do not know better than we now do what each of us thinks on important subjects, we will be expressing radically different views about the same thing.

"I think that our present course is dangerous, dangerous to the point of threatening the success of the Commission."

A part of the preparation for the Peace Conference in which the American delegation specialized was the drafting of a constitution of the League of Nations. There is a bundle of studies in Bliss' papers on the subject to which he had evidently given much attention long before the armistice. He was in good form as a prophet in his comments on the draft by Dr. S. E. Mezes before the Peace Conference had really settled down to work:

"In my comparative youth I served on the staff of a very wise old general. His mind was very active and he was constantly dictating memoranda of things that he had it in mind to do, reforms to accomplish and all that sort of thing. Almost the first day that I joined him he sent me one of these memoranda, on a rather important subject as I now remember it, and asked me to make any suggestions that occurred to me. From a feeling of modesty not always characteristic of youth it did not occur to me that he really wanted my criticism; so I returned his memorandum with a careful analysis showing its excellent points and only suggesting some rearrangement. It promptly came back to me with the statement that he knew the good points in his memorandum better than I did; that what he wanted to know was the bad points; and that, to know them, he wanted my criticism, even that suggested by well-intentioned foolishness or ignorance, because that could do him no harm and might suggest something useful."

Bliss suggested that the delegates to the League should be approved by the legislative bodies of the member nations for their knowledge of history and the law of nations and their intelligent interest in humanity, and then put his warning finger on the weak spots which later were to be a handicap in the Covenant as adopted:

"At the moment when we hope to establish the League, the number of great really civilized powers will be pitifully small. Yet with them rest

the issues of world-peace and world-war. It is of vital importance to minimize the chances of having any one of them secede from the League. Disguise it from ourselves as we may, the basic idea of the League is to begin some form of government for the world in which the ideas of the *best* class of men in the great civilized powers shall dominate, because the ideas of that class of men will be subject to a more or less wise restraint and, in my judgment, a wise *self-restraint* is going to be the saving grace of the League. But I see nothing in your provision to prevent the government of the world from passing into the hands of the lesser advanced peoples or, at least, being to some extent controlled by them. It would be a risk to the interests of such nations as the United States and Great Britain that we cannot expect them to take . . .

"Finally, 'territorial integrity and political independence' cannot be 'guaranteed' except by an agreement to make war when necessary to maintain the guarantee. The United States may make war to do this, but it depends on the will of the Congress then in existence. . . .

"I do not like the provision 'National armaments should be limited to the requirements of international security, and the Representatives of the Powers shall consider provisions for carrying into effect this principle.' There is only one way to carry the principle into effect, and that is to disarm. And the burning question is, 'Has not this war made us reasonably ready for it?' If not, God help us.

"I am of those who believe that disarmament and a League of Nations go hand-in-hand. When a dozen men sit around a table to discuss questions fraught with all sorts of possible irritation and it appears that some of them have a pistol in each pocket and a knife in their belts, while others have penknives and fire-crackers or nothing at all, the *first* and *sole* question is disarmament. There can be no fair and free discussion of anything till that is settled. The American principle, I am inclined to think, is a League of Nations with equal representation. How can you have equal representation with some nations weak and others with millions of trained soldiers or fleets of battleships or both? You must remember that a League of Nations will be born not only from a feeling of incipient international confidence and trust but also from the existing feeling of international distrust. The problem would be bad enough, but not thoroughly bad, if it were a League entirely of wolves or entirely of sheep. It will be a problem indeed, if you try to make it one of wolves *and* sheep.

"And what will the United States have gained from the war if this is to be the result? A League having some nations armed to the teeth will be dominated by those nations. That is what they will be armed for. And what part will the United States play in such a League? If she is going to play with wolves she must have fangs and claws as long and sharp as theirs. But, as I conceive it, we fought the war more for the purpose of avoiding this necessity than for any other one thing. If we

want to play with the wolf without becoming one ourselves we must pull all his fangs and trim *all* his claws. The wolf is militarism and thus far we have pulled only one fang.

"I think we can have a League in only one or the other of two forms; a general League of Nations disarmed for purposes of international war, or a League of four or five heavily armed nations who will impose their will upon the world and who will keep the peace among themselves only so long as each thinks that it is getting its share of the rest of the world."

Bliss not only knew the Constitution of the United States and the great judicial decisions in its interpretation, but he was not unfamiliar with the ways of the United States Senate, as appears in the concluding words of this letter:

"In the subsequent paragraphs I suggest that careful scrutiny be given to each one that touches on the constitutional rights and powers of the Congress of the United States. For example, under Paragraph 11 Congress would have to cede to the League its constitutional power and duty to regulate commerce. I do not see how Paragraph 15 can be effective unless Congress does what it cannot do,—delegate its power to make war to the League. Such things might cause adverse action by the Senate on any treaty."¹

Bliss' desire for a League was balanced by solicitude lest it prejudice its future by being ambitious for powers it could not exercise instead of making its way from a modest start. In a later memorandum referring to a weakness in a draft of Article X, he pointed out that there was no assumption that a member nation might be in the wrong.

"It would seem that careful note should be taken of the possibility of a Dred Scott decision being made by the tribunal of the League of Nations. Two nations which are not Contracting Powers may have a dispute. One of them, which is in the wrong, offers to submit its interests to the decision of the League. This State immediately becomes, for the purposes of the dispute, one of the Contracting Powers; and, as such, the League is bound to support it right or wrong."

Lansing had a draft in which two nations were not to be allowed to go to war without the consent of a three-fourths vote of the mem-

¹ Letter to Dr. S. E. Mezes, December 26, 1918.

bers of the League. This brought from Bliss the following comment in his diary:

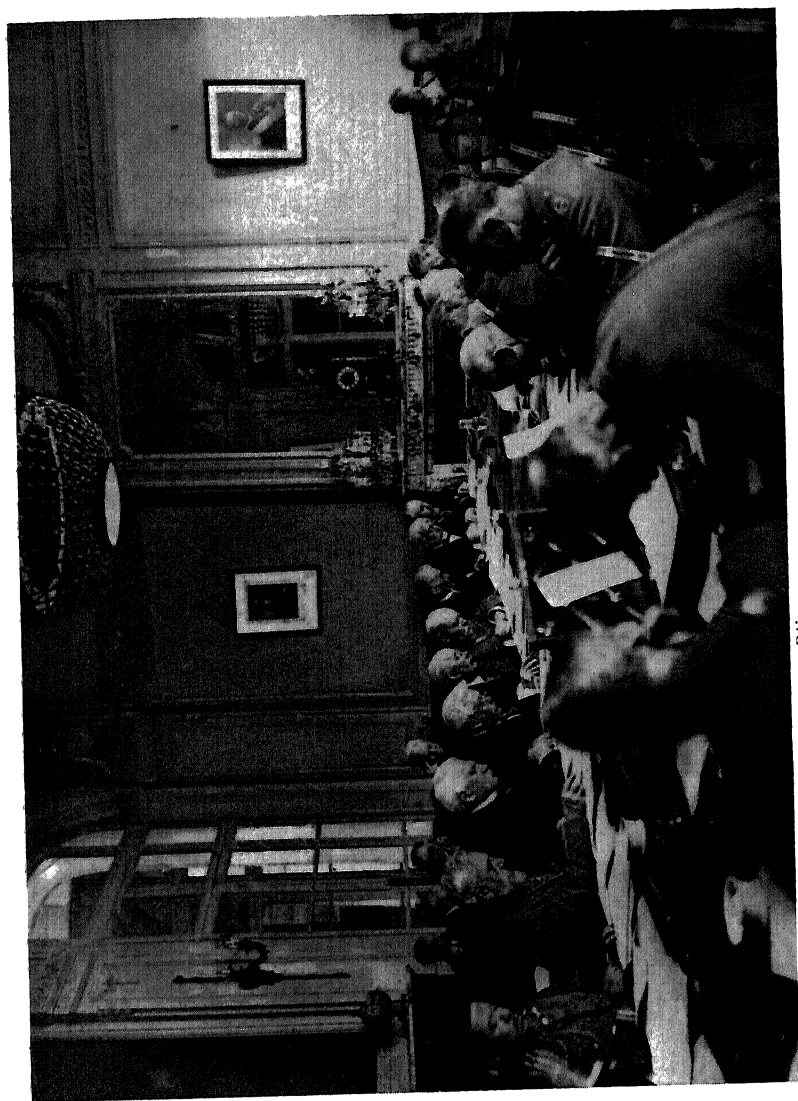
"Suppose five great nations, A, B, C, D and E are in the League and twenty 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th-rate powers are also in it; a dispute occurs between A and B which cannot be adjusted; C, D and E know that if A and B go to war they will be dragged into it and it will become a world war. They therefore vote against a war, but a three-fourths majority may be obtained by a vote of the little powers who have the minimum concern in the matter. Whatever else is done, I do not think that the principle of recognizing the right of two nations to go to war by a three-fourths, or by any vote, should be tolerated."

House, in touch with the President only by cable, had kept up his conferences for six weeks without knowing what might have passed in private conferences between Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando. On the evening of the day President Wilson arrived at Brest, Pershing remarked, "He has been a good President to me, but he has his hands full now."¹ Pershing, as well as Bliss, could speak feelingly out of his experience.

By this time the major Powers, on the basis of their preparations which had been begun many weeks before the Armistice, had had more than a month since the Armistice in which to form their lines. Their committees were already established and at work. So were the delegations of the small allies and the suppressed nationalities, their leaders including the conspicuous personalities of Paderewski, as eloquent for his Poland as Clemenceau was terse for his France, and Feisul of Arabia, while Dr. Thomas G. Masaryk, if less picturesque, was no less concentrated in the interest of the future Czechoslovakia. And all, from Georgians to Belgians and from Lithuanians to Chinese, thought of the President as their champion who would assure them that they got their just share in territory and future opportunity.

The peace ship from America disembarked experts who had made thorough studies. They knew their subjects legally, historically, economically, ethnographically, territorially, as the war college students know war before they face real war. They were detached, loyal servants of the President's aims who were about to face unprecedentedly difficult negotiations.

¹ To the author.



Bliss

THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL DISCUSSING THE ARMISTICE TERMS

Bliss became concerned about the "unnecessary assistant-personnel resulting not only in having two or more men to do one man's work but in unnecessary expense charged for the maintenance of the Commission." He had in mind that at the Headquarters of the A. E. F. were not only regular officers but civilians of high attainments who for a year or more in the business of coördination of every item of strength for the prosecution of the war had been in touch with all economic and political conditions in Europe, with all the conflicts of interests, sentiments and racial jealousies which must be considered in remaking that map of Europe. He thought that their recent first-hand experience might be useful to the newcomers.

But there had been an ironic touch in Bliss' reply to a cablegram from Washington before the arrival of the American delegation, requesting that the A. E. F. assign "French, German, Russian, Italian, Hungarian, Serbian, Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Japanese, Chinese, Czech, Spanish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Albanian, Polish, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, Algerian, Bulgarian and Persian interpreters for the Peace Commission."

Even the staff at American army headquarters had not so long a list of trained and educated interpreters. Bliss thought it likely that the Peace Commission might have unloaded on it from the ranks "Greek barbers, Italian peanut sellers and Bulgarian pedlers merely because they speak some form of their language"; and, therefore, those who knew the language of diplomacy and could translate diplomatic documents had better be sought in some other quarters.

It was on December 18, five weeks after the Armistice, that Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss:

"This morning we had a preliminary meeting of the American Peace Commission. I am disquieted to see how hazy and vague our ideas are. We are going to be up against the wildest politicians in Europe. There will be nothing hazy or vague about their ideas."

To Mrs. Bliss on December 31, when he turned the corner into his sixty-sixth year:

"My birthday! What a year it has been that ends today! The problems of the war already seem trivial compared with those that confront us. As a French general said to me, 'We used to study for a day or two ahead

—perhaps for a month. Now we think in terms of 50 or 75 years—perhaps even of centuries.’ ”

On New Year’s Day, when the Commission did not meet, he called his stenographer and dictated a review of the past year. He took modest credit to himself in his diary for his part in achieving unity of command. He thought he had prevented some errors by his colleagues at Versailles. Fortunately his government, which was so far away, had given him a free hand.

“It now seems like a long nightmare. Not more than thirty days before the Armistice, Marshal Foch, in conversation with me, still insisted that nothing had happened which diminished the necessity of having 100 complete divisions in Europe by the summer of 1919. Then came the end with startling suddenness.”

The day began a new era in which a new world was to be created, whether for better or worse no one could tell. He would not give way to too much fault-finding about the present outlook. He turned to Livy’s *Praefacio* as he looked ahead to the unfolding record:

“*‘Sed querulae, ne tum cuidem gratae futurae,
quum forsitan et necessariae erunt, ab
initio certe tantae ordiendae rei absint.’*¹

“Perhaps a fair interpretation of that will permit me to indulge my criticism a little later! In any event, surely, Livy’s invocation will be a fitting introduction to a record of some of the daily events of so important a year:

“*‘Cum bonis potius omnibus votisque ac
precationibus deorum dearumque (si, ut
poetis, nobis quoque mos esset) libentius
inciperemus, ut orsis tanti operis successus
prosperos darent.’*”²

In further celebration of New Year’s Day he and Colonel Wallace had a long walk in which he communed with the landmarks of old history while modern history was in the making.

¹ But let complaints, which will not be agreeable even then when perhaps they will be necessary, be kept away at least from the first stage of commencing so great a work.

² Rather would we begin, if it were customary with us also as it is with poets, more cheerfully with good omens and vows and prayers to the gods and goddesses that they would grant abundant success to our endeavors in so arduous a task.

"We went through the Tuileries Gardens, looked at the remains of the old palace, hunted up the brass tablet on one of the pillars of the Garden facing the Rue de Rivoli and just beyond the Rue de Castiglione, which marks the site of the Manège, where the Revolutionary Convention and Constituent Assembly sat; through the Place du Carrousel and the Courtyards of the Louvre, and thence over to the Church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois; thence to the Tour St. Jacques; then we went back through the winding narrow streets to the gardens of the Palais Royale; thence up to the Place de l'Opéra and down the Boulevards to the Rue Cambon, down this street to the Rue St. Honoré and over to the Rue Royale, stopping on the Rue St. Honoré to look at the house in which lived Robespierre, and so back to the hotel."

He concluded the day by dining with his old colleagues at Versailles, Generals Rawlinson and Studd. Rawlinson was sympathetic with Bliss' own radical views about disarmament and toward the American attitude generally, and took the view that if there were any hope for the peace of the world it rested with the United States.

"But, like most Englishmen, he insists that we must take our share with England in carrying the burden of peaceful administration of derelict nations and uncivilized or semi-civilized races. We talked about M. Clemenceau's recent speech in which he expressed his preference for the old Balance of Power, with each nation having strong frontiers and being prepared to guard them with its own force. I said that it was under that system that M. Clemenceau and his predecessors had to appeal to a League of Nations to save them. Had the League existed in 1914, it is most likely that the war would not have occurred at that time, although, as I have often said, if the general world conditions as to armaments were not changed, the war was certain to come sooner or later."

As the lines of policy became more clearly defined, Clemenceau's plan for the restoration of the Balance of Power was already envisaging the French alliance with the Little Entente to encircle Germany, and the English would cement Anglo-American friendship by the assignment of some of the proposed mandates over backward peoples to the United States.

Talk at the dinner turned to "the tendency of the Poles to make every world issue in Paris revolve about Poland."

"It is really quite impossible to talk with men like Dmowski and Horodyski about any subject without their immediately connecting it

with the Polish situation; the disposition of the German colonies, Bolshevism, the eastern coast of the Adriatic, the League of Nations, disarmament, everything, become with them a Polish question."

In paraphrasing an old story, he made it an Englishman, a German and a Pole who were this time assigned to write a monograph on the elephant. The Englishman went on an elephant hunt, the German did a vast amount of research, including how it was that evolution had given the elephant a long nose and a short tail; and "the Pole began his monograph with the declaration, 'The elephant is a Polish question.' "

Bliss had had a grand holiday from Livy in the morning, through stretches of philosophy and history, until story telling in the evening.

XXXIV

HIS WISDOM IN SHACKLES

THE simple fact is that Bliss was not "used" at the Peace Conference. His experience in the council of the nations at Versailles was untapped when the nations met again in council subject to the same influences that he had seen rising at Versailles. Of the American peace commissioners only he and Colonel House had had first-hand contact with the Europe of war time: House in meeting the statesmen on his visits when they were pleading for our entry into the war and again when they were pleading for us to hasten our army to their aid after the Caporetto disaster. The President had never met Lloyd George, Clemenceau or Orlando, never had a first-hand view of a heated meeting of the three at Versailles.

There was no Newton Baker, who knew Bliss through months of daily association, to sound his knowledge and wisdom. Bliss, who had never been given to pressing his suggestions unasked upon his chief, was in a new rôle which augmented his diffidence.

Few memoranda to the President appear in his papers. The President, who had the habit of forming his opinions from papers rather than in verbal conferences, possibly might have found it helpful if he, too, had allowed Bliss to look out of the window for a moment as Bliss thought out a problem and then gave his clear and impersonal if sometimes elaborate analysis. Bliss saw the President only five times in a personal interview during the whole Conference.¹

As we know, the President was fighting his own battle in the forum with Lloyd George and Clemenceau. Lansing fell back to the side lines in the company of Henry White, the fifth Commissioner, and eventually House lost his influence. That elderly general, who was seen about the corridors of the Hotel Crillon and who had had no field command, was regarded by the unknowing as almost a negligible factor.

Wonder was expressed why a soldier should be assigned to making peace when the business of a soldier was to make war. Considering

¹ Bliss' statement to General W. W. Atterbury and also to the author.

that the title of Colonel from the Governor's staff in Texas still clung to House in spite of his protests, the American Peace Commission might appear to superficial minds in ironic moments to have a militaristic tone.

In the psychology of the Peace Conference an army uniform was no longer the fashionable garb. Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando, who had endured the arbitrary demands of generals for more troops and supplies, rejoiced in being masters in their own right instead of the servants of the military kings. No general or any other statesman was a hero to any one of these three, and this included Wilson who had frequently irritated them during the war by what to them, as their remarks in the Supreme Council sessions reveal, might be termed a certain pedagogical and even super-mundane attitude.

Bliss' reference to the importance to the President of having the people behind him against the politicians did not exclude the youth of Europe who were in the trenches. These were not professional soldiers. They had been citizens before they were sent into the slaughter pit and were soon to be citizens again if another war was not imposed on them by the Peace Conference. They were inarticulate and under censorship. To them Wilson had been a hero. He stood for the hope that inspired them that their sons would never have to endure what they had endured. At the time he arrived in Europe this psychology was ripe. He might have been their spokesman, their apostle, rallying them to his cause.

But there was no resisting the plans made for the President by his statesmen colleagues. He must visit the Allied capitals in celebration of the victory and receive the applause of the crowds who, as they cheered, were thinking of the tribute he might help to turn their way. The moment for his appeal to the soldiers soon passed as it always has after every war. The view of the home masses and the politicians absorbed their own; they began thinking of their wounds and scars and their share of the rewards in this, their own, generation for their labors and risks. So preoccupied was the President that he did not visit the Meuse-Argonne battlefield where the citizens he had summoned by the draft had suffered 150,000 casualties. He would not go to the devastated region lest it should influence his feelings and thereby his impartiality as the arbiter of a just peace.

"M. Clemenceau then spoke to the President about the latter's visit to the devastated region and wanted to know when he would make it. The President put him off with a rather indefinite reply to the effect that he would take a day off at intervals after the work of the conference began. M. Clemenceau did not appear to like this. It is commonly reported that the French government is holding back the rehabilitation of the devastated district in order that the President may see it in its most deserted and devastated condition. I think that the President does not like this because it probably gives him the impression that the French want to make him 'see red' before the work of the Conference begins."¹

The thirty-six-day term of the first armistice expired before Wilson arrived in Paris; the armistice had to be renewed before the Peace Conference settled to work, and then renewed again. This was a shadow over the Conference, disconcerting its counsels. Another was the spread of Bolshevism feeding on the post-war chaos, which must continue until the peace terms set the basis upon which reconstruction and normal life were to begin. Bliss had written in his diary, December 23:

"I told Mr. Hoover of the subject of my interview and that it was reported that the Italians were preventing food supplies from getting in to the Yugo-Slavs along the Dalmatian Coast, with the idea of coercing those people to pledge themselves to vote for annexation to Italy. I asked him if nothing could be done in the way of our helping them out in this matter of food. He said that he now had a cargo of food at Trieste and that in a few days two more cargoes would arrive at Cattaro. He tells me that every effort has been made by both the French and Italians all through those regions to restrict importations of food except as their distribution may be controlled by them."

There is also a reference to a meeting with Herbert Hoover on December 28:

"The essential point appeared to be this: He says that Germany is eating up her stocks of food and in a short time will be at a starvation point with the attendant danger of Bolshevism. He said that we must have some relaxation on the embargo and permit Germans to get out

¹ Bliss' diary, January 6, 1918. After his appointment as Peace Commissioner, Bliss kept a diary which, as a record during the Peace Conference, succeeded his letters to Baker from Versailles.

and sell to the other nations certain enumerated commodities and be permitted to bring back to Germany in return certain enumerated commodities. He said that it was only by helping her to get on her feet that we can enable her to pay the damages and indemnities that may be demanded of her and that will head off in the meantime total ruin. He says that we must allow German merchant ships to go to sea under proper conditions, and probably with German crews. I told him that it was to prevent this very thing, to prevent Germany getting a start in the revival of her trade until the Allies were well ahead of her in the race, that the Allies insisted on putting into the original armistice conditions the provisions relating to the continuance of the embargo."

Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, January 14:

"The criminal delay in beginning any work of the Peace Conference may bring on a great disaster. The governments over here don't want to have official peace too soon for fear that it will give Germany a chance to revive commercially and industrially. Meanwhile they keep up the embargo. An empty stomach feeds on nothing; but Bolshevism feeds on empty stomachs. Bolshevism is the outcry of peoples against the idiocy of their governments. There is no end of people here in France and England and Italy ready to cry 'No Church—No Government' because they believe the Church and Governments have failed them."

The Allied statesmen might see the plan for a League of Nations as remote from their present need to guard against threatening upheavals at home by protecting their own people at the expense of the enemy which was the cause of their distress. This included heavy indemnities.

"I found Mr. Norman Davis of the Treasury Department (who has been assisting Mr. Crosby on the Inter-Allied War Purchase and Finance Council) in Mr. House's apartments and stopped a few moments to talk with him about the idea which I had suggested that morning to the American Commission in our conference. My idea has been that if the French attempt to impose terms on Germany for an indemnity which will carry the payment of that indemnity over a considerable term of years, they will never get all that they now hope for. My idea was to get the bankers of all the world to finance this German indemnity and then release Germany from all commercial restraint in order to make their credit good. Mr. Davis said that he believed that some such arrangement would probably have to be made."

While this might appear reasonable it must have the consent of the Allies, and in characterization of the conditions in Central Europe Bliss made this entry in his diary, January 17:

"Dr. Alonzo Taylor says that one community may be almost starving while another has plenty of food, but the embargoes and seizures of railway transportation by the different governments prevent the food from being distributed. He says that he did not see a single potato on the market or on the table in Vienna although millions of bushels of them were to be obtained in Hungary. Each state seizes the former imperial government railway rolling stock, in order to build up its own railway equipment. Bohemia cuts off the supply of coal for Vienna; the Yugo-Slavs refused transport of flour to Vienna until they could get salt. He says that there is absolute and universal social disorganization."

While these conditions prevailed the Peace Commissioners of the different countries held their first formal meeting January 18, nine weeks after the signing of the Armistice. Bliss' diary gives a very brief and matter-of-fact paragraph to the historical occasion, which failed to appeal to his powers of characterization and description. On January 22 he recorded:

"Mr. Herron came to explain his views about the existing situation beyond the Rhine. He was a former professor of sociology and has the reputation of being an advanced socialist. . . . During the war he has been living in Switzerland as an agent for the State Department, observing and reporting on the general situation. Mr. Herron expressed rather startling views. He thinks that all of Europe is going down in universal ruin unless she can be saved by the United States. He says that Bolshevism is working everywhere sapping and undermining the foundations of society. . . . He says that the common people are hopeless and are looking to the United States as their last chance of salvation. He thinks that the United States must come out with a declaration to the peoples of Europe that it will stand behind them no matter at what cost until their complete rehabilitation and that it will even go to the extent of a military occupation of Europe by the United States. I told him that if this was the only solution I was afraid that the case was hopeless."

In view of the possibility that the Germans might renew the war Foch wanted to retain the American army in France. He suggested that our soldiers should be put to work while in rest cleaning up the debris in the devastated regions. This met a prompt negative by both

Bliss and Pershing, to which Baker gave added emphasis.¹ Having committed us to a sector in the Rhine occupation, reports were soon coming in that the Americans were too friendly to the Germans whom many of our soldiers found more likeable and progressive than the French.

Bliss' time was much occupied in resisting proposals to send our troops elsewhere. Poland wanted 70,000 Americans to form a suggested *cordon sanitaire* against Bolshevism. When Bliss mentioned the matter of supplies and transport he was told that our soldiers would require only warm clothing. He suggested that Bolshevism would pass through the lines; it carried no arms except propaganda.

"We may, at great expense and a great risk, send a powerful military force to conduct a winter campaign in Poland and Russia. But why should we do that when at infinitely less expense we can to a reasonable extent feed Germany and build up there a strong democratic government which will be the natural barrier between western Europe and Russian Bolshevism. . . . The British and the French positively assert that they cannot send any troops, that their people are too tired and that they will not fight any longer. Therefore, if we do not act wisely, a situation may be created that will require us to assume this enormous burden or see the civilization of western Europe gravely imperiled. The French seem to think that while their people will not go to Poland or to Russia, they will be willing to invade Germany; and they are probably right. It sometimes looks to me as though they wanted to have Bolshevism spread in Germany in order to give them an excuse for a military occupation of that entire country. But if Germany becomes Bolshevik and joins hands with all of Eastern and Central Europe, an attempted permanent occupation of Germany by the French may prove a great disaster. This is especially true because of the seething ferment of discontent in Italy, France and England. It may be that a Bolshevik Germany would pull them all down in her own ruin." ²

Ambassador Francis appeared in Paris to appeal for more American troops in Russia. He had been fostering a counter-revolutionary movement in Archangel which he thought ought to have his country's support by force.

"Mr. Francis quoted the statements of some one with whom he had talked in London who seemed to think that the British government and

¹ *Newton D. Baker: America at War*. Palmer. II, 403.

² Bliss' diary, January 6, 1919.

our own had a weakness for Bolshevism. I told him that none of us liked Bolshevism but there were some different views as to the best way to correct it; that there were some people who were so convinced that their way to correct it is the only possible way that they accuse any one who differs with them of being Bolsheviks. In my opinion this was not merely unjust, it was childish.”¹

He insisted that it be made clear in all conferences on the subject that the United States could be depended upon to take no part in any operation in Russia, and would send no more troops to Archangel or Siberia.

“Bolshevism in Russia is simply one of the many confused blotches on the map of Europe. To it, everything seems in intolerable confusion, Russia no more so than other states. If we could only make peace *at once*; if we could only say to Germany and Poland and Czechoslovakia and other states, ‘These are your definitive boundaries, stay inside of them and stop fighting your neighbors and trying to steal their land’; if we could only do all that, getting that part of Europe into condition of orderly peace that it is praying for, then the condition of Russia would stand out in clear and glaring colors. Then the people of the United States might see that peace in Russia is the only thing necessary to secure universal peace. . . . But it is certain that it will not lift a hand to do this so long as we maintain the state of war with the Central Powers, so long as we dispute—not with Germany but among ourselves, as to the terms of peace that we will impose on Germany.”²

Soon after the Armistice the Italians had moved two battalions of our troops to disputed Fiume, where American soldiers had been arrested for vigorously taking the part of a native girl who was attacked by Italian soldiers for wearing a Yugo-Slav flag. Bliss proposed that we withdraw not only our soldiers but our naval forces from the Adriatic, and “no American soldiers should be employed for maintaining order in any community in Italy.”³

“I do not suppose that the American government, in making large loans of money, in the contribution of large quantities of supplies, and in furnishing the slight direct military assistance, which it did to Italy, had for a moment in mind the fact that it was doing all this solely for the purpose of enabling Italy to make these conquests.”⁴

¹ Bliss' diary, February 3, 1919.

² Memorandum to House, February 17, 1919.

³ Memorandum to House, December 22, 1918.

⁴ Letter to Lansing, January 9, 1919.

The requests which came to Oscar Crosby, the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in Paris, asking for loans to enable our Allies to strengthen their military forces ran wholly counter to Bliss' views about the limitation of armaments. He said he knew "no reason why Belgium should be an exception to the rule; no reason why the United States should finance an increase of 100,000 men for the Belgian army."¹

He favored a forthright public statement that Congress must be considered in the American acceptance of any of the various plans. This was not regarded as politic, but Bliss always made a point of mentioning so important a factor under our Constitution on certain occasions when it applied to proposals at the meetings of the Military Representatives on the Supreme War Council, who had almost as many perplexing problems to deal with as in war days. There was one on February 4 to discuss "the equitable appropriation of troops for maintenance of order in Asiatic Turkey." After an agreement was reached Armenia and Kurdistan were still uncared for and were allotted to the United States. Bliss said they would have to wait on the consent of Congress which could not be expected until next winter, if at all.²

The committees labored; the Council of Four and the Council of Ten met. Reinforcements were brought up for the sieges and counter sieges, which became more wearing on the Commissioners. Bliss wrote on January 21 to Mrs. Bliss:

"But, oh my dear, if you could see my room, you would not expect much letter writing. Tables, chairs, lounges, are piled up high with papers, marked 'important,' 'urgent' and all that sort of thing. And then the people that waste my time with foolish talk! Two or three are waiting to see me now. A Persian delegation is coming, a Chinese one has just left, Poles—Czechs—Yugo-slavs!! I wish there never had been a war—or else that it lasted longer—for peace seems to be worse than war."

This letter included the following item:

"Lord Reading, for example, told me a good while ago that he was about to return (he is British Ambassador in Washington) but he is still here. I am inclined to think that it would be a good thing for us if he went, for he seems to be trying to block our path here. . . ."

¹ Letter to Lansing, January 13, 1919.

² Bliss' diary, February 4, 1919.

And the path to which Bliss kept his own steps in their Olympian tread was that of loyalty to the President's aims. He expressed it in his memorandum about the fourth armistice, which was now under discussion.

"The one thing that all the American advisers of President Wilson are especially concerned in is that nothing be done, at their suggestion or by lack of their suggestion, that at any time could with any justice be alleged to impugn his good faith.

"At no moment should the following be lost from consideration. When Germany made her final appeal to the President, he replied, enunciating certain general terms and principles which would be acceptable to him, and said that he would refer the whole matter to the European Allies associated with him in the war and that he would be guided by their views. The heads of the Allied European governments met in Paris and, after prolonged and careful consideration, drew up the terms on acceptance of which they would be willing to grant an armistice to Germany. These terms were finally accepted in solemn conference at Versailles and were telegraphed to the President in Washington with the declaration that he could inform Germany that if the latter would accept them they would unite with the President in negotiating peace with Germany on the basis of the President's fourteen declarations. Germany accepted these terms and signed the conditions of the Armistice on November 11, 1918."¹

The Armistice had been renewed for two periods of a month each after the conclusion of the thirty-six day period of the first one. The French inclination in the successive armistices was to make each one more exacting, gradually weakening and disarming their ancient enemy. They complained that the Germans were breaking some of the clauses of the latest armistice, especially the financial and economic. This was a matter for the economic representatives of the Allies to consider in council with the soldiers; but, anyhow, a new armistice must be drafted for February 17 when the third armistice expired.

Foch and Weygand brought forth the draft of "quite an extraordinary" document, as Bliss called it, in which they had included the provisions which they "assumed would be finally agreed upon as the conditions to go in a treaty of peace." It had settled all the details including the permanent military force Germany should have and

¹ Memorandum to Lansing, February 7, 1919.

her future boundary with Poland. The Germans were to be told that if they refused to accept these terms the war would be renewed.¹ "Of course, I refused to accept this," Bliss said, "since the Peace Conference, and not the soldiers, was making the peace treaty." Bliss proposed that the Military Representatives now proceed to frame the final military and naval terms so that these would be on a definite basis. He wrote to Mrs. Bliss, February 26:

"I have been swamped with committee work. I am on a committee—Marshal Foch is President of it—to prepare the final military terms of peace with Germany. It has been one continuous fight. I made reservations against what the French regard as a *sine qua non* condition, viz. perpetual military occupation of Germany under the guise of a great military commission. It would mean that the United States might be dragged into war over any trivial dispute 10 years from now. I told the Marshal that it was silly for him to expect me to agree to it when it would do no good if the Senate rejected it. He said he would not submit any report to which I made any reservation because that would give me the right to oppose it before the Supreme Council. I told him I would enter a reservation against anything that I thought was radically wrong. To-day he has receded and we have agreed on a draft. It remains to be seen what the rest of the committee will do. But I think they will do anything he wishes."

A fourth armistice, without the definitive terms, had to be concluded owing to the prolonged discussion by the Foch committee about the final plans for the limitation of German armament in the future and how the conditions imposed were to be enforced. In his memorandum, attached to the minutes of the meetings of the committee, Bliss mentioned that he made it a point to inform his colleagues that as these terms would probably be a part of the Peace Treaty they would be subject to ratification by the United States Senate which would examine them with minute care. "To my amazement," Bliss wrote, "not one of my foreign colleagues had the slightest realization of the fact." In his criticism of the terms which Foch had prepared as a compromise, Bliss said in part:

"You propose in Article 15 to suppress 'every organ charged with the study of past or future operations, or designed to propagate the military science, under any form whatsoever.' Suppose some be-whiskered and be-

¹ Bliss' diary, February 11, 1919.

spectacled professor in a German university begins a course of lectures on the art of war as practiced by the ancient Egyptians or by the Hebrews in the days of Moses and Joshua. You will say that it would be ridiculous to assume that the Special Commission would regard such a course of lectures as a violation of the provisions in Article 15.

"That is quite true; it would be very ridiculous to so regard it. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it would be a violation of the terms of the proposed Article 15; and it is not ridiculous to assume that at some time there may be some very foolish persons on the Special Commission sitting in Berlin who would regard this be-whiskered and be-spectacled professor as a menace to the peace of the world; and these foolish members of the Commission are just as likely to be Americans as of any other nationality.

"Moreover, after he has begun such a course of lectures, at what point will you call a halt? Will you allow him then to proceed to discuss the art of war in the times of Alexander, of Hannibal, of Cæsar, of Gustavus Adolphus, of Frederick the Great, of Napoleon the First, of Grant and Lee, of von Moltke, of Hindenburg, and of Foch? If not, where will you stop him?

"Or, again: suppose that the Special Commission in Berlin has reason to believe that Germany has one field gun more than the number which she is to be allowed to have; suppose that Germany declines to pay the fine of ten times the value of this field gun, assessed by the Special Commission—shall the United States be obliged to go to war along with the present Allies and other Associated Powers in order to collect this fine? But, you will say, it is ridiculous to suppose that we will go to war for such a cause. Why will you not do so? Will you allow Germany to flaunt in your face the fact that she intentionally has one gun more than her allowance? If so, how many more guns will you allow her to have before you go to war?

"All of these things illustrate what I have said before, viz., that the ultimate sanction of a treaty is the general implied threat of war in case the other party fails to comply with its evident purpose and intent. This purpose and intent, therefore, should not be specified in such detail that the enemy may violate these details a little here and a little there, knowing full well that you will not go to war as the result of it."¹

And he reminded the committee again of the powers of the United States Senate under the Constitution. On the subject of toxic gases he said that Germany should be forbidden to manufacture any for war purposes. But referring to the word used in Article 5, "Unless the Allies agree to a general prohibition of the use of these gases in future wars, it would seem unwise to characterize the employment

¹ Minutes of the meeting of the Foch committee, February 24, 1919.

of them as 'cruel' when used by the Germans." Some of his Allied colleagues must have thought, at times, that he was almost pro-German, but they would hardly have thought so if they had heard him cursing the barbarism that destroyed Rheims Cathedral.

He astonished them when he said that on the basis of her population and her land boundaries Germany was entitled to an army of 400,000, but limited in heavy offensive artillery, to preserve order at home and to defend her frontiers from attack, as a practical measure in the present state of Europe. He would also allow her to retain both her eastern and western frontier fortifications, the few she now had for defense. Haig would allow her eastern but not her western fortifications to remain; the French would destroy all. Haig proposed a German army of 200-250,000, but the French stood firm for 100,000, and finally Haig said to Bliss a little wearily, "Oh, well, let them have their way."¹

How was it to be raised? The British were stubborn for volunteers; the French and Italians for conscription because that would be more easily controlled and because there was popular opposition in their own countries, especially in Italy, to the continuance of conscription.

House, who, in the President's absence in the United States, was receiving the direct fire of his Allied colleagues in front and on both flanks as well as a good deal in the rear from home, asked unifier Bliss if he could not devise some compromise which would end the controversy. But Bliss said this was impossible between two systems that negated each other.

He stated in a memorandum in his papers that "it looked as though the matter was cut and dried between M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George before the plenary conference which adopted the terms." The two had come to a compromise, between the French limitation of numbers and the British demand they should be volunteers, on a German army of 100,000 volunteers. Clemenceau in the chair shut off further talk on the subject and adjourned the meeting. Bliss relates this sequel:

"We at once rose from our seats. The French were sitting in their regular place on my right. Marshal Foch and General Weygand passed

¹ From notes in the Bliss papers.

me around the corner of the table and as they approached M. Clemenceau I heard General Weygand say to him in a very excited way, 'Do you mean to say that the conference has approved a voluntary army of 100,000 men?' There immediately followed a heated discussion between them and M. Clemenceau, which I doubtless could have overheard had I remained where I was standing. I did not propose to play such a part and accordingly moved away.

"But from various remarks that I heard immediately thereafter it was evident to me that there was a general impression that Marshal Foch and General Weygand protested bitterly against the action, which left those who saw the incident, or heard any part of the conversation, with the conviction that these gentlemen believed nothing less than a trick had been played upon them by a prior agreement between M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George."

Doubtless Foch and Weygand were thinking back to Napoleon's limitation of the size of the German army through which, under the volunteer system, they circulated recruits for drill to make a large force which had its representatives on the field of Waterloo and in the subsequent occupation of Paris. After the World War the German staff sent an officer to America to study the American regular army; and, without violating the terms of the Treaty, trained 100,000 regulars, every man of whom would classify as a capable sergeant.

Bliss also expressed his opinion pungently on another subject in his letter of February 26 to Mrs. Bliss:

"Yesterday Mr. Balfour asked me to be present with the Supreme Council when they discussed the Polish situation, involving the question whether American troops would go there. I wish they had given me an opportunity to speak on that point. I can think of nothing more insane than to ask the United States to send its troops on another war before we have finished this one. But they found that they had not received a lot of data they needed for the discussion and I had no occasion to speak. I am beginning to think that the world is in for another 30 years' war. This one really began in 1911 and so seven years of it are gone. The 'submerged nations' are coming to the surface and as soon as they appear, they fly at somebody's throat. They are like mosquitoes, vicious from the moment of their birth. All their energies are devoted to raising armies and all begging the United States for troops, for money, for arms and what not."

He unbosomed himself to the same effect to his old army friend, Crowder:

"I wish I could write to you more at length. I am scribbling this line (I am writing it in my own hand but it will be typed in the morning) at 2 o'clock in the morning and my desk and tables are piled with a week's work. And most of it does not concern us Americans at all. . . .

"Europe is bankrupt¹ and yet it is making plans for all sorts of military operations after peace is signed (if it ever is) with Germany. And they can do none of the things that they have in mind without the help of the United States. They expect troops and money and supplies from us. They say that we came into the war and that we must now see them through the problems resulting from the war.

"I think that the most humane thing we could do to Europe would be to say that when we have signed peace with Germany we are going home and will let Europe settle her own problems in her own way (she'll do it anyway), while we attend to our own problems."²

Possibly the quiet Mrs. Bliss would have concluded that that husband of hers had sat up a little too late and it was time he kept better hours, took some long walks and had more leisure for his Horace and a detective story with a fresh and compelling plot to read. At the worst, she knew he was only blowing off steam under conditions which kept a large volume under compression. Yet, in all his relations with his colleagues and with the polyglot procession of his callers, he kept his nerves under control although his urbanity was sometimes touched with brusqueness and his replies occasionally had a keen, factual edge.

If Wallace or Grant did not quite suffice as listeners when he blew off steam, there was always a warm reception for him, in any mood, at the home of Robert Woods Bliss, the Counsellor of the American Embassy in Paris. Both Bliss and Mrs. Bliss, in their broad culture, understood him when he referred to classic or modern instances illustrating the perversities of this human world. Mrs. Bliss shared her husband's appreciation of his powerful expletives when he opened the escape valve of his emotions. He might walk up and down in Socratic freedom of philosophy in their living room just as he would in the hall at home.

On one occasion when some one said that Keats was the Mozart of literature, there was an outburst which was in no wise related to

¹ Bliss here expresses the common American opinion of the time, although France had a gold reserve of \$1,200,000,000, and Great Britain, the foremost creditor nation, had lost only about one-fourth of her capital.

² Letter to Major General Enoch H. Crowder, March 3, 1919.

any Plenary Session of the Peace Conference which sought to settle the future peace of the world and make the Serbs, Italians and Greeks happy in their quarrels for the portion of mother earth which each regarded as the inalienable right of each as a chosen race. Even Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn* did not appeal to Bliss. To compare that jingle-smith, who had form and words but no ideas or power, to the great Mozart was as absurd as to compare an ephemeral versifier of the hour to Horace.

He consigned a limp and deflated Keats to the scrap-basket. Ah, but Brahms! The mention of Brahms raised him to the top of Olympus on a fair day in spring, surveying the planet's spread. Brahms sounded his depths and breadth of mind.

And now we return to Foch who, in formulating peace terms, was true to his military principle, "To make war is to attack and to attack." When one proposal was rejected he proceeded quite undiscouraged to bring his tactful and luminous persuasive powers to bear in favor of another. With our army now returning at the rate of 200,000 men a month, and the British just as determined as we were to have their men at home, his Allied command was rapidly dwindling in numbers. Since it had now become clear that Germany was weakened by the disintegration of her army and civil strife, he was not quite so insistent that we should retain a million men in France until the Peace Treaty was signed.

But he continued to remind us that there were many chores for us to do yet in the proper dismemberment of Austria and enclosing Germany in a wall of nations friendly to France. An American force might be most useful in restoring order in Hungary and occupying Vienna. The Hungarians and then the Rumanians had violated the armistice line: then when a neutral zone was established, the Rumanians had marched across that. Their advance into Hungary had led to the fall of the Karolyi government and placed Bolshevik elements in the saddle.

"There appears to be no doubt from what Mr. Norman Davis has told me, that some days prior to March 25th (when the evacuation of Odessa and provision for the maintenance of the Rumanian army were discussed by the Council of Four), the British and French governments agreed with the Rumanian government to provide for the entire maintenance of

the latter's army.

"From Colonel Browning's reports to me of the proceedings of Marshal Foch's Committee, there seems to be no doubt that the European Allies expect that the United States will not merely provide certain food, clothing, etc., for the Rumanian army, but it will also share in all of the other expenses of its maintenance. *There is no law under which this can be done.*"¹

On February 26 he wrote a letter to the American Commission proposing that the Allies be informed of our attitude in a manner that would end the appeals to draw us into tangent adventures for which there was no authority even though the Commission assented.

"There is every reason to believe (it is quite evident from the statement made by Marshal Foch at the meeting of the Supreme Council yesterday afternoon) that a plan is in preparation for waging war on Russia as soon as peace is concluded with Germany. This plan contemplates the formation of a great army of Greeks, Rumanians, Czecho-Slovaks, Poles, Esthonians, and others, under French direction, to fight Russia. It is perfectly well known that every nation in Europe, except England, is bankrupt, and that England would become bankrupt if she engaged on any considerable scale in such an adventure. I have reason to believe that such a plan could not be formulated except in the hope that the necessary assistance will be given by the United States. My personal belief is that the desire to get American troops, even if it be only one enlisted man or one officer, to go to Danzig for the ostensible purpose of helping the Poles, has this larger plan in view. Danzig would naturally be a most important base for operations against Russia, to be undertaken by an army composed of the forces indicated above. . . .

"I think that the time has come for a carefully guarded, but kindly and positive declaration of the purposes of the United States. No one but the United States can give this declaration. I have said to Frenchmen and Englishmen that, in my personal opinion, I did not believe that the United States would engage in another war in Europe. Such a statement generally meets with a shrug of the shoulders and the counter-statement that the United States cannot desert the Allies in Europe in the settlement of questions growing out of the present war. If it be a fact that we are going to assist Europe in the settlement of these problems, with our troops and money and supplies, that fact should be officially declared. . . .

"I recommend that the American Peace Commission give consideration to these suggestions with a view to having the President of the United States come to a thorough understanding with all political leaders

¹ Memorandum in the Bliss papers.

in that country as to the future military and financial relations of the United States to the European problems growing out of this war and which will not be finally settled by the signature of peace with Germany."

He drafted a cablegram to this effect, to be sent to the President, but before the Commission concurred in it, the President had sailed, March 5, back to Paris, to renew his bargaining for his war aims and the League of Nations.

The soldiers, having framed the military terms, might feel that the onus of future delays rested with the statesmen, whose squabbles seemed endless. Indeed, in spite of all his differences with his colleagues, Bliss was in a mood in his letter to Mrs. Bliss, March 9, that gave him a high opinion of the direct methods of his profession.

"I have been pegging away as usual or perhaps a little more than 'as usual.' We have finished the final peace terms with Germany. It was a hard task. I do not like them at all. The English are all for hanging the Kaiser. The French want it too. It would be curious to see the English hang the grandson of Queen Victoria. It is the politicians who make the trouble. I think the military men have more horse sense than any of the politicians. Of course, that is between you and me."

Mrs. Bliss might be convinced that she knew one soldier who had more horse sense than many politicians except when he became too elevated by general ideas. Again, in the course of the fluctuating peace negotiations, the politicians would be up and the soldiers down in his estimate as he viewed all actions and attitudes with reference to the crystallization of his general ideas in one concrete idea and purpose on which his mind was stubbornly set—a practicable peace which would be enduring and an infant League of Nations which would learn how to walk before it undertook the burdens of an Atlas.

He knew the final peace terms were really far from finished when he wrote to Mrs. Bliss, March 25:

"Things here seem to me to grow blacker and blacker every day. . . . To me there does not seem to be honesty or common sense in political men over here. I don't wonder that the world is going Bolshevik. It is the last despairing cry of people who have lost all faith in their government."

THE BREAKING DREAM

UPON his arrival in Paris Dr. James Brown Scott, the veteran expert in international law, had asked, "Where are the Germans?"¹ Dr. Scott had worn the uniform of his country in 1898 and again in 1917-18, but he did not forget that it had been customary in previous peace conferences to have representatives of the beaten enemy present for the discussions of details after the general outline of terms had been settled. Bliss proposed that the framing of the Treaty might be hastened for the good of the world if the Germans were brought to Paris for consideration of the points which had been already agreed upon.²

Joseph C. Grew, the Secretary General of the American Peace Commission, had requested replies from the various sub-commissions or committees as to progress during the President's absence and how far, if at all, they had violated his principles. At the time Bliss made his suggestion he had the replies before him.

"The following named commissions have not progressed sufficiently to date in the preparation of their reports to admit of making a statement: Economic; Financial; Reparations; International Labor Legislation; Territorial Questions; and the Supreme Economic Council. The following commissions have not reported: League of Nations; Responsibility; Ports, Waterways and Railways; Czecho-Slovak Affairs; and Rumanian Territorial Claims."³

The list reveals the wide spread of the task of remapping Europe territorially, economically, financially, politically in prescribed racial patches and arranging the shares of indemnity to be paid to each claimant by the beaten nations. Lack of industry did not account for the delay. The commissions were as busy as staffs in battle. The American groups had prepared programs which seemed to them disin-

¹ Dr. Scott to the author.

² Memorandum for the American Peace Commission, April 3, 1919.

³ Memorandum from Grew to Bliss, March 13, 1919.

terested, since America asked nothing for herself; but these programs were subject to the objections of all the submerged races from Asia Minor to Central Europe and to those of the master races bordering on the English Channel, and then to all the differences between their own various interests.

These unsettled problems awaited the President upon his return to Paris. The acclaim that welcomed his first coming was noticeably absent for his second as the cards of force were again being played at the council table. When our great army was crossing the Atlantic and moving into the trenches he had held the aces in the game of life and death. Now, as every day saw more of our soldiers homeward bound, there was a retreating bayonet tip behind our moral influence.

In Paris an irritated sigh with its "So Wilson is back!" took the place of the thrill of "Lafayette, we are here!" The old slur of "the perfidious English" was again in vogue on the lips of Frenchmen in place of the moist-eyed relief on August 4, 1914, when it was learned that England had declared war on Germany and her soldiers were landing in France. For war passions and racial passions make for even shorter memories than family quarrels at the breakfast tables, with the contrary effect of overshadowing all past affections with present malice.

In the increasing glow of national pride each Ally was less inclined to admit its dependence upon the other Allies for victory. America was seen as having entered the war just at the end for the honor of the last kick at the enemy. Our battle losses had been comparatively slight. It did not occur to our Allies to wonder what might have happened if the United States had not come into the war at all, or if we had not turned our naval forces against the submarine; or our treasury and factories had not strengthened the Allies' weakening sinews of war; or it had not been known we were coming in huge numbers at the time of the March and April crises of 1918; or we had not been across the Paris road at Château-Thierry; or fed division after division into the maws of the Meuse-Argonne; and, finally, if we had not prepared to send four million men across three thousand miles of ocean to compel victory in 1919. This was as easy for each of the Allied statesmen to forget as it was for him to forget the efforts of his nation's European Allies. Gradually all were

becoming convinced they had saved America from German invasion.

And now these theorists from America, these doctrinaires with their talk of high ideals for other peoples without seeing the moles in their own eyes, these emissaries of the young nation, had come to teach the old nations lessons which thousands of years of experience had taught the old nations in blood and death could not be applied. The theorists would have a society of nations keeping the peace for other countries which must be eternally in face of the danger from which Allied arms had freed distant America in 1914-18.

What did these outsiders with their charts and their ethnographic records know of vigils in the North Sea against the submarines, or holding Verdun against the enemy, or the snows of Alpine heights in battle, or the sufferings of Poles or Greeks or Armenians who had all learned that only arms kept the burglar from the door?

And this disciple of Walter Bagehot, this cloistered pedagogue suddenly lifted into the Presidency, and remaining cloistered in the White House as the waves of Armageddon rose higher over its doorstep!—What did he know of the realities of this Armageddon, the eternal passions which had made it and which, with the aid of pointer and blackboard, as the ethical master of all the peoples, he would resolve out of existence? And now America was expecting the payment of the war debts due her and tightening the strings of her huge purse filled with the gold from Allied purchases. Many Europeans saw the President's self-determination of peoples, with its creation of states within racial frontiers, as a perpetuation of racial rivalry and arming, at the expense of established natural economic frontiers, in contrast with the American practice of its boasted melting-pot, in which amity among the races came from their amalgam in a single state.

Meanwhile, the interests, both home and foreign, which would be served by his support and European idealists of his own mind did not cease their flattering unctiousness that the hope of the future of Europe and the world was America's acceptance of its destined part in world affairs. But opinion in the United States was rising to a contrary view; there was growing alarm lest our old policy of avoiding entangling alliances should be sacrificed by dangerous commitments abroad through the Treaty and the League of Nations.

In Paris, where the Peace Conference was held, the French at-

mosphere prevailed, the French influence was unescapable, when France held the most intimate memories of the folly of being unprepared for war. French and British and all other European nationalistic propaganda played upon American groups of sympathizers—the Franco-Americans being more French than the French—in tune with kindred nationalistic aims at the Conference.

Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando, those veterans of parliamentary experience which was their school for high executive political office, were bearing heavier burdens than when the President had departed on his visit home, as they met again with the peer who developed his opinions from the written word rather than in verbal counsel and whose training was that of the scholarly tutorial executive. Demobilization and reconstruction and the home outcries against continuance of their personal autocracy, which had been conferred upon them in war time, brought embarrassments and penalties. That spinning and molten ball of world affairs, which was supposed to be plastic to their moulding, was in danger of slipping out of their scorched hands if they fumbled their domestic politics.

The agents of predatory and often short-sighted selfishness, which had been hidden in the rear during the war, or outshouting those who acclaimed war ideals, were beleaguering every peace mission, all pleading that they were thinking in patriotic terms. Some nationalistic group of his own country pressed upon each statesman some interest in every other country which the Treaty would affect. Interest was interlocked with interest and their real purposes masked. The whispers of ten thousand intrigues sought a hearing as front door propaganda consulted behind curtains with backstairs gossip in evolving a properly disguised and effective tactical approach. And the American mission was not free from this bedevilment from home as well as foreign sources.

Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando had their daily reports on the course of public opinion in America and what would fan and smother backfires. They knew, through American information, without having to read our Constitution, that the Treaty would be subject to ratification by the Senate, but it did not suit their purposes evidently to spread the news. What actually passed in the Councils of the Big Four we shall never know first hand, and second hand will not satisfy. Only a historian under the spell of Lloyd

George's mesmeric personality would depend upon Lloyd George's unconsciously gifted flexible memory.

But no set of transactions of a gathering of human beings has certainly ever been so fully documented as that of the Peace Conference when all who had a part, except in the Council of Four and the Council of Ten, felt that they owed history the obligation to retain all their carbons and to keep a diary in addition. The record is so heartbreaking in the failure of human good intentions to overcome human perversity that military staff colleges and the soldier on the drillground found it a warrant for their "We better be ready. They're going to need us again."

The world knows the course of the Paris negotiations so well that the background is clear for further quotations from Bliss' papers. He was unhappy. After all his labors, he had thought that, with the end of the war, he was in sight of the promised land, only to find it studded with bayonets and torn by shell-bursts.

He mentioned to Mrs. Bliss that he was getting tired, an admission which he never made to her when his work was going well. The constant friction of the file wore his nerves, as well as those of the other conferees, down to the raw edge at times. His flashes of irritation in his letters belong in his biography. But he was still so far master of himself in council that he vented none of the bursts of temper which sometimes broke up the conferences of the Big Four, after the discussions of high policy became concentrated in the secret meetings of Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando, thus completing the circle from "open covenants openly arrived at" back to the old closet diplomacy. Clemenceau referred to Bliss as "an independent mind who had well-anchored personal opinions and never budged from them. Also an admirable physician who returned an everlasting *no* to whatever he was asked, and never attempted a word of explaining."¹

Bliss refers frequently in his diary to how the demands for reparations grew as the collapse of Germany became more evident. Indirect losses were included with direct losses. "Prime Minister Hughes of Australia is claiming that a house in Australia with a mortgage on it, which mortgage can be reasonably assumed to be due to the war, is as much an injured house requiring reparation as

¹ *Grandeur and Misery of Victory*. Clemenceau. p. 149.

a house in northern France or in Belgium with a shell-hole in it." Bliss also related how Dupuy, the great newspaper owner of France, "all during the past year, until the time of the Armistice, talked to me of a policy of conciliation and reconciliation and deprecated the idea of the session of territory as the result of the war. He even at one time early in last year said to me that France could very well get on without the return of Alsace-Lorraine." Bliss went on to say:

"The evil result of governmental control of the press is that the government creates a popular sentiment which it afterward cannot keep in check. The government has created the idea in the minds of the French people that all their expenses of the war will be paid by Germany, including reparations, the return at compound interest of the indemnity of 1871 and large accessions of territory. It has told the people that a great pension system will be provided for out of the funds to be obtained from Germany during many years to come and that it will not be necessary to raise taxes in France."

The variety of the appeals which crossed Bliss' desk, and which must be wrestled with by the committees, may be illustrated by examples other than the better known ones of the Lithuanians against the Poles, the Saar, Danzig, Fiume, Silesia, and the Swedish demand for the Aaland Islands.

An American, C. Telford Erickson, Honorary Delegate of the Albanian Federation, said that America, having entered the war to fight the battle of the weak against the strong, might convince Europe that "we are not a money-loving, materialistic people who will use our present advantages to achieve the commercial supremacy of the world" by coming to the rescue of Albania, "a poor orphan child among the nations, whom none pities or cares for, and who will be otherwise abandoned, maltreated and perhaps destroyed."

There was also the Banat of Temesvar, which was a "rich thickly populated province of southern Hungary, now occupied by Allied troops" and which "presents a most complicated problem both economically and ethnologically, and is equally claimed by Rumania and Serbia."

From Madrid George Bronson Rea wrote in capital letters: "Our one safeguard lies in Morocco, internationalized and neutralized." This referred to "the Paris-Gibraltar-Dakar-South America Railroad

and Steamship" project. If the Peace Conference conceded to France the control of Morocco, Spain would be strangled by the pressure of France to the north and the immense Franco-African empire on the south, while South America would be placed at the mercy of an European commercial and military drive. America must stop this now in her own interest or the Monroe Doctrine would go by the board. Bliss replied that "the railroad project to Dakar may doubtless affect the future peace of the world, just as a thousand other projects do or will." But it was impossible to forestall the danger through the American Peace Commission which was occupied with "work of its own up to its eyes, connected with the immediate object here."

Security as well as future opportunity for expansion was a controlling motive of all nationalistic actions and appeals. Before his trip home the French had appeared to accept the League of Nations draft presented by Wilson, but without any confidence in it. Something of more solid substance for their future defense than the experimental covenant would be direct commitment of American arms and power. The following pact, to be signed by the United States and Great Britain, was submitted to Bliss:

"In order to prevent any aggressive attack in the future by the German nation upon France or Belgium, we mutually agree to unite and to use immediately our military, financial and economic resources to defeat any such aggression, and also to give our moral support to prevent it."

Bliss wrote a penciled memorandum in comment, March 20:

"This draft is a modification of one proposed by Mr. House, and which he suggested to meet the French threat that they could not accept the League of Nations unless this promise was made by the United States. Neither Mr. Lansing nor Mr. White nor I approve of this draft or anything like it. It will surely kill the League of Nations Covenant."

No one had more faith in the League, or was more loyal to it than House who was ready to make compromises in its behalf. It had been rumored, without grounds of support, that while the President was at home, House had neglected to protect the League, which had already been formally accepted, from undermining influences. Clem-

enceau had hailed House's proposal with delight and changed the word invasion to attack.¹ But the answer of the United States Senate and doubtless the House of Commons would have been a negative supported by a more vigorous one from every British or American soldier who had been in the trenches.

Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, April 3:

"Things here are coming to a dangerous pass. The French military party are making demands for the occupation *in perpetuity* of the Rhine by our Allied Army including 100,000 Americans and other things on which we cannot yield. And if we don't yield, there is no treaty. If the French yield and Marshal Foch should resign it means the downfall of the government. I cannot believe that they will go to such an extreme but I am beginning to think that the military party does not want peace. We have about come to the conclusion that the President ought to give them a time limit and say to them that at the end of it he is going home and will lay the matter before Congress. We are not seeking territories nor indemnities. We have no object except to help in making a peace that will *endure* so that we won't have to come over here again to save them. But to join with them in making demands that will unite Central and Eastern Europe in a war against the west is a thing we cannot do. It may be that some one will yield and then we can settle things quickly. But if not, I think the Conference will end in a dismal failure. Which it is to be you may know before this letter reaches you."

With House taking his place when he was ill, but less consulted otherwise than formerly, the worn President continued his meetings with his three colleagues of the Big Four in settling the mighty world issues which revived the war's call for super-men heard during the war, but who never appeared although many volunteers held up their hands in proof of a sublime faith in their competence. The President sent his famous cable asking when the *George Washington* could be at Brest. Perhaps her presence in the harbor, enforcing the suggestion that he would break off negotiations and go home, might give him a useful card. He was in the mood to demand that all future negotiations should be in the open.

Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, April 7:

"In the afternoon the American Commission had a two hours' conference with President Wilson at his house. We all agreed that there

¹ *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*. Seymour. IV, 363.

should be no more secret conferences of the 'Big Four' but that the President should tell his colleagues that they must at once come to time, or to insist on having all points of difference openly discussed in the Plenary Conference. I think things will come to a crisis this week. We have said that often before, but now I do not see how it can be postponed. . . . Spring is near at hand. The foliage is coming out rapidly and the *marronniers* along the Champs Elysées are in full bloom. I wish you could be here to see them or that I were with you and Eleanor."

On April 11 came a very stormy meeting of the Committee on the League of Nations lasting until one in the morning. On the appeal of former President Taft, a strong advocate of the League, and in response to the apprehension at home about the reported draft of the Covenant, Wilson proposed an amendment which prevented interference with the validity of the Monroe Doctrine.¹ Our own national interests now claimed attention. The British opposed most vigorously, while M. Léon Bourgeois became impassioned in favor of French as the official language of the League. Wilson's eloquence failed to move French objection to any exception for the Monroe Doctrine. The Japanese added to the turmoil by bringing in an amendment about "the endorsement of the principle of the equality of nations and the just treatment of nationals," which had a slant at our Exclusion Act.²

On April 14, after further discussion, the Monroe Doctrine amendment was accepted, and the Covenant sent to the drafting Commission for final details to wait on the Plenary Session. The Treaty seemed so far advanced that the Germans were invited to Versailles to listen to its provisions. Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, April 15:

"It begins to look as though the end of the Peace Conference is in sight, though still, perhaps, a good way off. The Germans may be here on the 25th. But I have no idea that they can or will be coerced into signing without full discussion. Still it is a great thing to have got the treaty ready for them to discuss. . . . The only real difficulty is the question of Fiume and Dalmatia. I hope the President can settle that in the near future; then perhaps we can all return together. But the wars are not yet over."

The conspicuous wars of the moment were between the Poles and Ukrainians, the Hungarians and Rumanians, while Greek troops

¹ *What Really Happened at Paris*. Miller, p. 416.

² *Intimate Papers of Colonel House*. Seymour. IV, 426.

were about to land in Turkey to start another, and war between the Italians and Yugo-Slavs threatened over the possession of Dalmatia and Fiume, not to mention Bolshevik uprisings. There were also reports of pogroms in Poland which had killed many Jews. Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, April 17:

"The French government has fed the people up on the belief that the Germans are going to work for them for the next two generations—pay all their taxes, their pensions, their expenses for this war, etc. The terms are beginning to leak out and there are mutterings of indignation already. . . . I hope the common sense of Europe will come to its rescue. Bolshevism seems to be a hideous peril; but how to fight it? If they would and could agree to give up their official government propaganda, I believe the Allies might be willing to treat with them. They must treat with them in some way or else fight them. It is not yet known whether there will be any hitch in the plan to have the German delegates here on the 25th. If they come, I fancy they will be allowed a couple of weeks to study and may even be permitted to take it back to Weimar. At the end of that time I should hope that the Italian and other questions might be settled and then I should hope we could be home by summer. I live in that hope."

No letter by Bliss better expresses his convictions, his deep feeling and the guiding influence which fortified him in all his war labors than the one written April 19 to Lansing:

"I do not know anything that more disgusts me, that makes me more sick of the cant and hypocrisy of our peace talk, than the fact that I can offer no reason which anyone else would accept as valid, against your replying to this letter to the effect that so far as I know our government will have no objection to the sale by the Liquidation Commission of these arms, ammunition and artillery 'to the governments named or to any other governments which may be fairly considered in the friendly class.' In fact the Liquidation Commission was created for that purpose.

"I do not know what limitations are imposed upon this matter by law; but I fear that under the law, it is the unhappy fact that, while we may not sell to an enemy government, we may sell to those who are for the moment friendly to us, even though we know that they are bitterly hostile to each other and at this moment are preparing to fly at each other's throats.

"We may sell to Poland though we know that Poland is eagerly preparing a campaign against the Ukraine, the success of which will overthrow a government which is friendly to us and which will make that country Bolshevik, although the Ukrainian government has declared un-

reservedly that it will abide by the decisions of the Peace Conference which thus far Poland has declined to do.

"We may sell arms to Poland though the head of that government has declared that it will fight Germany if its demands for Danzig are not fully realized; and that it will fight Czechoslovakia if its demands for Teschen are denied. And we may sell to Czechoslovakia in order that it may fight Poland for the same object.

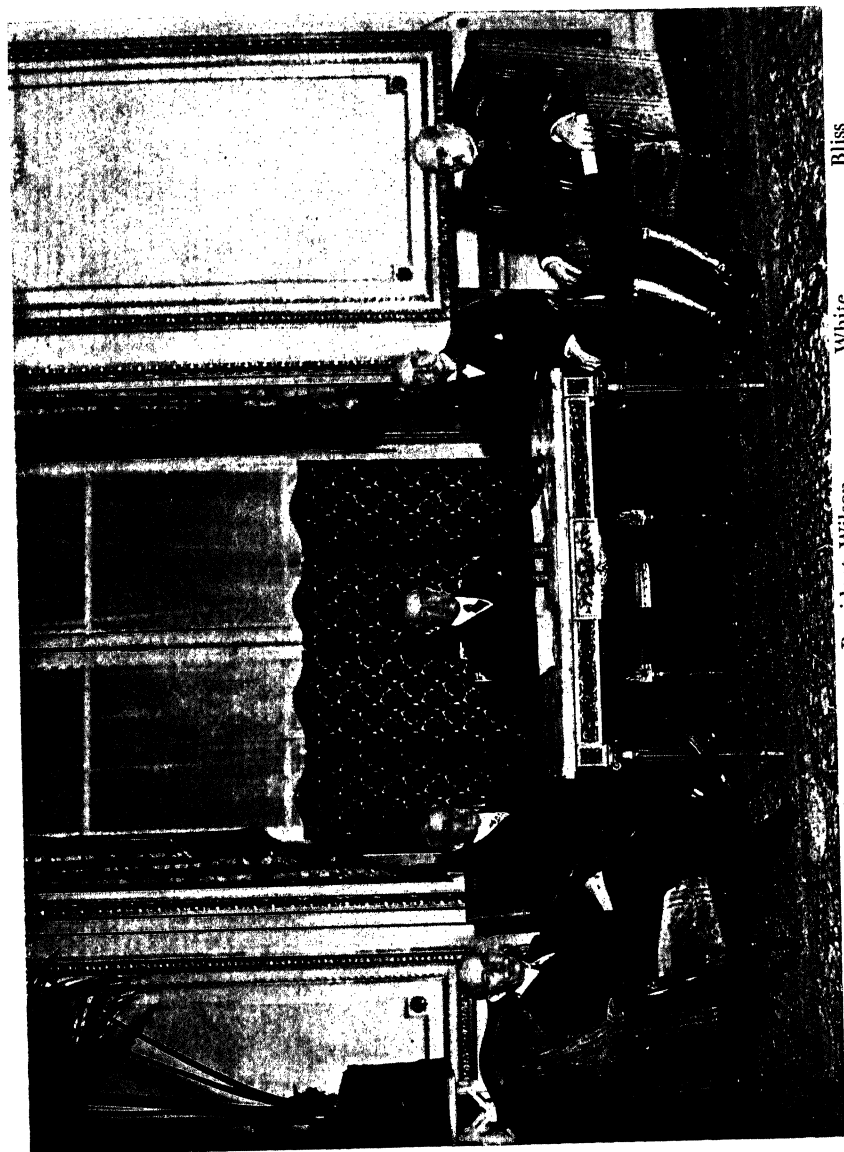
"And so I might go around the wearisome and bloody circle. The arms which we brought to Europe in order to kill militarism and to bring an era of lasting peace, we are going to sell over the bargain counter to the new nations which we boasted that we were going to usher into a world of peace. It would be bad enough if we sold for cash; but as a matter of fact, we are selling for credit the value of which will depend on the success of purchasers in killing a sufficient number of their neighbors. Our securities will be valuable only in proportion as they are stained with blood.

"Personally, I would rather be taxed to my last dollar to pay for this material of war if we threw it into the sea than to have it sold for any such purpose.

"And why should we not throw it into the sea? What more splendid object lesson could the United States give to the world than to utterly destroy this material? By selling it we will get a bagatelle of its cost to us, plus a long tale of dead men, of maimed bodies, of ruined habitations and devastated fields and starving women and children. With the arms, artillery and ammunition that we have already used we—we Americans—have already, in a good cause, destroyed towns and villages, created widows and orphans and have left starving women and children. The cause was good because we believed that we were forever putting an end to the cruel business. Why should we, because we have a little of this material of destruction left over, and in order to save a little money, sell it to the highest bidder (who will be low at the highest) in order to continue the cruel business indefinitely?

"But I fear that the hard-headed taxpayer will not listen to these silly sentiments, whether expressed by me or you. Therefore I shall not weary you with more of them.

"I wish that the President could recommend to the American people that all weapons and material of destruction that are not required to be taken back to the United States for our own protection should be utterly destroyed. I can conceive of no more magnificent testimony to the American ideal of lasting peace. Let us sell our surplus food and clothing and animals and wagons and motor trucks and tractors and locomotives and railway cars and shops and machinery—everything that makes for the peaceful development of these countries over here—and destroy everything that is used to destroy anything. But I am afraid that



House

Lansing

President Wilson

White

Bliss

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the taxpayer would not listen to the President any more than he would to my sentimental twaddle."

On April 24 the Plenary Session had accepted the final draft of the Covenant of the League. It was to be a part of the Treaty. Now the Italian claims to Fiume and the Japanese claims to the German concession in the Chinese province of Shantung were the next problems. Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss on April 28:

"My last letter told you that before it reached you you would know whether a smash-up would occur in the Peace Conference. You know all about the withdrawal of the Italians. Orlando has gone back to Italy and is scheduled to address the Parliament in Rome. It is to be hoped that he will now try to calm the Italian mind and bring them to reason. Like the French, they have gone mad on militarism and conquest. But I fear that Orlando will find that having let the devil loose it is going to be a hard matter to chain him up again.

"The next thing to find out is Japan's attitude. Their head delegate, Chinda, says that if we do not recognize *all* her rights of conquest in China, she will refuse to sign the treaty and decline to enter the League of Nations. This makes some of us afraid that some concession will be made to Japan that will be irreconcilable with our attitude towards the Italian claims. My advice is to let them both go, if they want to go. It is time to clear the air—to draw a line on one side of which will stand the robbers and on the other side will stand the honest men."

In this letter Bliss mentions having been with his fellow peace commissioners, House and White—on a trip of the same kind which President Wilson had avoided lest he see red—to the devastated region, under the auspices of the French government. The scene was not new to him, but Ambassador and Madame Jusserand had earnestly requested him to go.

"It was interesting to note," he wrote, "how grudgingly the French members of the party admitted that all of the destruction at Lens was done by the British army, which also did a good deal of damage elsewhere." This was not in criticism of the British army, which had only practiced a necessary military measure as it might have had to do against an enemy invading Britain and as the French had frequently done in their own country. Protests by Alsatians against a swath of inevitable destruction by an American advance to deliver

their country from German rule had been a weighty determining factor in the choice of the American sector in 1917. Alsace preferred not to have freedom at the expense of the leveling of her towns and villages by Allied and German guns in concert.

XXXVI

RIGHTEOUS WRATH

UPON his return to Paris after two days' absence, Bliss learned that a compromise on the Shantung issue was on the cards. In 1897, at the height of the era of colonial expansion by the European Powers, Germany had landed a force of sailors at the port of Ts'ingtao in reprisal for the murder of two German missionaries, which had aroused the Kaiser's holy wrath in demonstrative indignation in the name of God and Himself and excited his imperial cupidity. The Peking government had been forced to cede Kiaochow Bay on a ninety-nine-year lease to Germany, which had gradually expanded her influence by railroad building and other investments, looking toward a protectorate over the great Chinese province of Shantung.

In 1914 the Japanese besieged and captured Ts'ingtao with the aid of a British force. Japan was firm that she should have the cession of the German rights in face of the vocal protests of Ally China which had been incapable of any military efforts against the common enemy or in resistance to the Japanese.

President Wilson had said at a previous session that he would later ask his fellow commissioners for suggestions about Shantung.¹ Bliss apprehended that the President's decision might not wait on the suggestions. Lansing and White asked him to write a letter expressing his views, which were their own. His relations with the Japanese were pleasant, but here a principle was at stake no less than when Foch, with whom he was personally so friendly, wanted him to approve of the permanent occupation of the east bank of the Rhine by American troops. After he had paced back and forth dictating what he called a "hasty note," he hesitated as to whether he was warranted in addressing the President in such strong terms, and then called a messenger and sent that hasty note, which was thorough and complete in its reasoning. It has been published in full. In this instance we shall rely upon its essential points:

¹ Bliss' diary, April 29, 1919.

"Since your conference with us last Saturday, I have asked myself three or four Socratic questions the answers to which make me, personally, quite sure on which side the moral right lies.

"Japan bases certain of her claims on the right acquired by conquest. . . . Suppose Japan had not succeeded in her efforts to force the capitulation of the Germans at Ts'ingtao; suppose that the armistice of November 11th had found her still fighting the Germans at that place, just as the armistice found the English still fighting the Germans in South-East Africa. We would then oblige Germany to dispose of her claims in China by a clause in the Treaty of Peace. Would it occur to anyone that, as a matter of right, we should force Germany to cede her claims to Japan rather than to China?

"It seems to me that it would occur to every American that we would then have the opportunity that we have long desired to force Germany to correct, in favor of China, the great wrong which she began to do to the latter in 1897. What moral right has Japan acquired by her conquest of Shantung assisted by the British? If Great Britain and Japan secured no moral right to sovereignty over various savages inhabiting islands in the Pacific Ocean but, on the other hand, we hold that these people shall be governed by mandates under the League of Nations, what moral right has Japan acquired to the suzerainty (which she would undoubtedly eventually have) over 30,000,000 Chinese in the sacred province of Shantung?

"Japan must base her claim either on the Convention [the Twenty-one Points] with China or on the right of conquest, or on both. Let us consider her moral right under either of these points.

"a) If the United States has not before this recognized the validity of the rights claimed by Japan under her Convention with China, what has happened since the Armistice that would justify us in recognizing their validity now?

"b) If Germany had possessed territory, in full sovereignty, on the east coast of Asia, a right to this territory, under international law, could have been obtained by conquest. But Germany possessed no such territory. What then was left for Japan to acquire by conquest? Apparently, nothing but a lease extorted under compulsion from China by Germany. . . .

"Suppose Germany says to us, 'We will cede our lease and all rights under it, but we will cede them back to China.' Will we recognize the justice of Japan's claims to such an extent that we will threaten Germany with further war unless she cedes these rights to Japan rather than to China?

"Stripped of all words that befog the issue, would we not, under the guise of making a treaty with Germany, really be making a treaty with Japan by which we compel one of our Allies (China) to cede against her will these things to Japan? Would not this action be really more un-

justifiable than the one which you have refused to be a party to on the Dalmatian Coast? Because, in the latter case the territory in dispute did not belong to one of the Allies but to one of the Central Powers; the question in Dalmatia is as to which of two friendly powers we shall give territory taken from an enemy power; in China the question is, shall we take certain claimed rights from one friendly power in order to give them to another friendly power."

Bliss drew attention to the actual meaning of Japan's promise to return Kiaochow Bay eventually to China. Her proposal reserved an exclusive concession at a place to be designated by her on the bay, which assured her full control of the bay. She said she would abandon the 50-kilometer zone. This, as Bliss noted, had been set as the limit of the advance of German troops; but, as Bliss added, Japan had violated this zone ever since she took possession. Until recently she had had troops along the length of the railroad and now insisted upon maintaining a guard at Tsi-nan-fu, 254 miles from Ts'ingtao. He concluded the hasty note as follows:

"The operation then would amount chiefly to an exchange of two pieces of paper—one canceling the lease for 78 years, the other granting a more valuable concession which would amount to a permanent title to the port. Why take two years to go through this operation?

"If it be right for a policeman, who recovers your purse, to keep the contents and claim that he has fulfilled his duty in returning the empty purse, then Japan's conduct may be tolerated.

"If it be right for Japan to annex the territory of an Ally, then it cannot be wrong for Italy to retain Fiume taken from the enemy. . . .

"We shall be sowing dragon's teeth.

"It can't be right to do wrong even to make peace. Peace is desirable, but there are things dearer than peace, justice and freedom."

Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, May 1:

"This morning we are all mortified to learn that the President had yielded to the Japanese claims. . . . How he can reconcile his attitude to the one he took on the Italian claims on the east coast of the Adriatic I do not see."

Japan had been most agreeable in supporting President Wilson's plan for the League of Nations and leaving European problems to the Europeans. With Shantung and its well-built German railroad

system under her hand and her troops (by request of the Allies) already at Irkutsk in the vast Siberian domain of the Russia which she had recently fought, she was now thinking of her own regional compacts in the Asia of her own Monroe Doctrine, and no less than Ally France, Italy, Serbia or Greece, of the expansion of her power under the provisions of the Peace Treaty. She said she would refuse to sign the Treaty unless her claims were admitted. This threat to the League won her point with the President, which in turn placed another barrier to ratification of the Treaty by the United States Senate. Later, as we know, Japan yielded her claims to Shantung and, in face of the growing army of the Soviets, turned her attention northward to the occupation of Jehol and strengthening her bastions on the Siberian border.

Bliss had made no progress with his suggestion that disarmament should be the first premise in founding the League and his concern about certain articles of the Covenant which were "fortunately or unfortunately tied up with the peace treaty, did not abate." He wrote:

"The Germans have been here for two days and the Treaty is not ready for submission to them. The English and French seem to have gone mad on the subject of destroying Germany commercially and industrially for a long time to come. Every day I hear of the introduction of new articles with this object in view. I am told that the Treaty will cover more than 400 printed pages. It contains many things which should go into separate conventions. But no one trusts anyone else and each one seems to think that his own interests demand that his particular schemes must be embodied in the Treaty.

"No one seems to have faith in the continuance of the Entente long after the peace. They are trading on each other's present friendship. But I cannot tell you what is in the Treaty, because I have not seen it. Most of the articles I have never seen in any form and I am told that the few that I have ever seen have been altered by the Council of Four, or the Council of Three, beyond recognition. It is strange but true that the Plenipotentiaries of the many nations supposed to be making the treaty of peace, will not know what is in the Treaty any sooner than the Germans will know."¹

Bliss found that Foch was no more enlightened than he when the President inquired for information about the application of the

¹ Letter to Hamilton Holt, May 1, 1919.

military terms of the Armistice in a manner which would not be inconsistent with the peace terms.

"He [Foch] said that he did not know the text of the peace terms; that no one had ever shown him a text of the peace terms and that he had no information on the subject. . . . He could not even tell the relation of the Armistice Terms to the military peace terms, not to speak of financial and economic matters which are treated of in both the Peace Treaty and the Armistice. He said that he did not even know which of the military terms drafted by his committee had been retained and which had been thrown out, nor how those retained had been altered."¹

Foch would write a letter as soon as he could see the articles in the Treaty on the subject. These might still be uncompleted as was the remainder of the Treaty. However, attrition and exhaustion were wearing the conferees down to a decision as they had the armies on the western front. A week later Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss:

"Tuesday we had a secret Plenary seance to listen to a stupid exposition of the Peace terms for the benefit of the smaller Powers. None of us had seen the treaty. I have never seen such a glaring case of secret diplomacy, notwithstanding all our protestations. The outrageous yielding to Japan on the Shantung question could never have happened if it had not been done secretly. The protests of the world would have prevented it. Thank God, my skirts are clear (or at least my conscience is) of any of the wrong doing.

"Yesterday the Treaty was handed to the Germans. It was in the great dining room of the Trianon Palace Hotel where my offices have been since 1917. All the Allied and Associated Powers delegates assembled in the room before 3 P.M. We were arranged at a double Ell table, the open end being partly closed by a smaller table for the German delegates. At 3 o'clock the latter were ushered in, the other delegates rising.

"Brockdorff-Rantzau sat in the middle with two of his assistants on each side. M. Clemenceau spoke for a moment what you have already read in the papers, rather stern, almost harsh. This was translated first into English and then into German. Then Rantzau read his remarks which you have also seen. These were translated (very poorly) first into English and then into French. That was all the ceremony.

"I did not see that the Treaty was actually handed to them, though I fancy a copy must have been laid before Rantzau. French and English express much irritation because Rantzau read his remarks sitting. But he is in an exceedingly broken, nervous physical condition. I don't be-

¹ Letter to President Wilson, May 1, 1919.

lieve he could have stood on his feet. There is much dispute as to the wisdom of his remarks. Some think they were quite untactful, others say that it was a shrewd statement. Now the question is 'Will they sign? And, if so, how long before they do so?'

One may conclude that to Bliss the histrionic effect would have been more direct and forcible and better in keeping with his sense of the eternal verities if the Kaiser, Bethmann-Hollweg of the "scrap of paper," and Hindenburg and Ludendorff had been in the place of the unhappy Brockdorff-Rantzau, now acting as the scapegoat of their colossal gamble with the cards which they thought that their military machine had stacked for them—the gamble which they had lost at the cost of more than two million German dead. Bliss wrote to Mrs. Bliss, May 9:

"The Germans have the treaty but peace does not seem so near as it did. We are working on the terms with the former Austrian states. That is much mixed up. Czechoslovakia is now an independent friendly state; Hungary is getting into possession of the Rumanians; Yugo-Slavia has joined Serbia. We can hardly do anything with them except make them pay their share of Austria's *pre-war* debts! The Austrian peace delegates arrive at St. Germain on Monday. With them come Bolshevik delegates from Budapest, though they were not invited! What to do with them is puzzling the big wigs. Naturally enough the French don't want Bolsheviks here preaching anarchy. There is too much tinder of that sort ready to light up."

Except for the description of a motor trip, which gave him a little rest, there is little further about his work for the next three weeks except to say he was exceedingly busy. Nothing about this period of exasperation and doubt is forthcoming in his diary, which was written on sheets of letter paper, unless these sheets are elsewhere than in his study. The subject peoples, becoming masters, were turning upon their former masters in the license of general disorder. He wrote to Mrs. Bliss, June 6:

"We have had sessions with the financial experts most of the day and now a British gentleman (Dr. McLaughlin) connected with the American school at Smyrna has just left my rooms after telling horrible stories of Greek atrocities to which he was an eye witness a week ago. It makes one sick to listen to the stories of our investigators coming back from

visits to different nations that our ignorant people at home have deceived themselves into believing are noble races long subject to barbarous oppression. From everything that I learn I judge that the Armenians and the Greeks are much worse than the Turks. Our friends, the Poles, are massacring the Jews and everywhere the people we are liberating are slaughtering everybody else. . . .

"The Council of the Powers is still discussing whether it will listen to the counter proposals of the Germans. Five years from now the world will condemn the Conference if it does not listen to them. The Treaty as it stands is unworkable. . . . The Americans pointed out the defects, but the Allies would not listen to them."

On June 12:

"We have been busy—all the committees that had anything to do with making the Treaty—in preparing our recommendations for the reply to the German counter-proposals. They are now all submitted to the council of Four and the latter's official reply to the Germans is supposed to go to them tomorrow. Then they must sign or decline in a week."

On June 16 he was in a bad mood. He had become a disappointed idealist for the moment, as had many others in the Conference, but it was certain that even this outburst would not make the philosopher tarry long in the company of the cynics.

"Monday we must know what the Germans are going to do. They may want to play the part of blind Samson and pull down the pillars of the temple—for if they don't sign, the world will go 'Crac.' What a wretched mess it all is! If the rest of the world will let us alone, I think we had better stay on our own side of the water and keep alive the spark of civilization to relight the torch after it is extinguished over here. If I ever had any illusions, they are all dispelled. The child-nations that we are creating have fangs and claws in their very cradles and before they can walk are screaming for knives to cut the throats of those in the neighboring cradles."

And also this:

"Today the Council of Four gave me the job of getting the Hungarians, the Czecho-Slovaks and the Rumanians together and persuading each of them to get within their own frontiers and stop fighting! A nice job to unload on a peaceful and peaceloving and somewhat tired man, isn't it?"

On June 19 Clemenceau told him that he thought the Germans would sign but had asked him to call so they could talk over "what the armies can do if the Germans don't sign." President Wilson was also concerned on this score. The military advisers were again in conference to make plans for action, with Bliss on sharper watch lest American troops should be employed for political purposes.

"The French are all wrought up over the sinking of the German ships at Scapa Flow. They regarded a good part of these ships as a sure increase to their own fleet. They may begin a series of notes to Berlin on the subject and then no one can tell when the treaty will be signed. The President says that if they sign he will immediately return to Washington and leave the rest of us here. The Austrian treaty has not yet been agreed on. And as yet there is no government in Hungary that can be trusted to sign a treaty. But the President wants us also to participate in the discussions on the treaties with Bulgaria and Turkey even though *we* (the Americans) may not sign those treaties. We did not declare war on Turkey and Bulgaria and I do not see how we can make a treaty of peace with them. . . .

"He [President Wilson] is certainly a most extraordinary man. Ambassador Jusserand described him to me a few days ago as a man who, had he lived a couple of centuries ago, would have been the *greatest tyrant in the world, because he does not seem to have the slightest conception that he can ever be wrong.*"

In his next letter, written on June 30, he said that the treaty was signed "at last—one of them." He gave a brief description of the famous scene, but thought there was too large a crowd to make it very impressive.

"During the signing the cannon began to thunder and then the great fountains began to fill the air with snowy foam. From my seat I looked out upon the Terrace, down the great flight of steps to the fountain of Latona and along the long avenue bordered by statues to the fountain of Apollo and the Grand Canal. It was a slow process getting out, and a long process getting my car and then back to Paris, glad the affair was over."

Having paid the negotiator's price to the Allies for his League of Nations, the President departed quietly and swiftly for his gallant, losing battle to get his own country to accept it, which prostrated him in his long, fatal illness. "He had surrendered his power of con-

trol over the situation in Paris," Bliss remarked in his letter of June 24, "by making himself one of the negotiators. When he did that it forced the other great powers to send their heads of government." But Clemenceau was at his seat of government, Lloyd George only a few hours away from London, Orlando a day away from Rome while Wilson was a week away from Washington. Wilson was not actually a parliamentary premier as each of the three was but he was more: the head of his nation as Poincaré was of France, King George V of Great Britain and Victor Emmanuel III of Italy. Bliss continued:

"When you negotiate you have to negotiate, that is, to talk, discuss, argue. But pretty soon you reach a point where your mind is made up, but you cannot say so. You must keep on talking as long as the other side has anything to say, even though you know he is intentionally 'killing time.' Then it is all important to have someone to whom you can appeal and who can give a deciding order. But with all the heads of governments present, whom could they appeal to? Now that the President will be in Washington, when we reach a point beyond which discussion will be useless, we can cable to him. His mind will also be made up from our daily telegraphic reports to him and he has had no one to delay the matter by saying that he wants further discussion with him."

After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles Bliss made two remarks which might then be considered as of his "no explaining" kind, to use the words of Clemenceau; or it might be said that he left the explaining to the future: his counsel, in common with that of many other men while the Treaty was in the making, having fallen on sterile ground. The first remark was that the Treaty was "neither punitive nor constructive." The other was: "We are in for a low period, then a high period, then the devil will be to pay all over the world."¹ The second might easily be credited as a true economic forecast of the post-war depression, the boom period of 1925-29 and the subsequent period of depression.

This but partly sounds the depths of the two remarks which we may relate to his call for unconditional surrender by the enemy who would have had to accept it and to his view that the armistice and peace terms should be kept separate. If the terms were to be made punitive enough to satisfy the old avenging lust of an eye

¹ Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss to the author.

for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, which would forever make Germany helpless, then Germany should have been laid waste and her people sold into slavery as in ancient times. But punishment took another form without her people having had brought home to them by unconditional surrender the public admission on the field of battle of complete military defeat.

The armistice terms and the peace terms had disregarded the immemorial principles of military and human psychology to which no vigorous race in all time had been an exception. A constructive peace would not have laid upon Germany a money indemnity which she could never pay through the long years, it would have given some hope to a rising generation which was not responsible for the errors of its fathers, and the other nations of Europe would have given an example in the limitation of the militarism which they saw as the cause of the World War.

As it worked out, and was bound to work out, the Germans lived over their war ordeal in pride of their courage and sacrifices, honoring their dead, glorifying the victories they had won and minimizing their defeats, as all peoples have ever done. These memories are the keener to the vanquished in want of fewer present satisfactions the while they dwell upon riches of the pre-war era which they see as lost to them through misfortune rather than their weakness or errors.

The Germans nursed the conviction that, after having stood off the whole world for four years, they had not been beaten at arms but they had been cunningly tricked by the repeated armistices, each armistice in turn artfully stripping them of their power of armed resistance, in order to impress upon them terms which made the Fourteen Points appear as a decoy to their doom. A people given to brooding, they brooded over the injustice of their delegates' forced signature to a confession of war-guilt, when they thought, as war propaganda teaches all people to think, that they were fighting in self-defense.

Their flamboyant and neurotic Kaiser and their war lords had made their share of the guilt heavy enough, but they knew that Russia had been the first major power to order a general mobilization and then when the weak Czar would recall it he could not check the movement which his war lords had begun secretly without his

approval. They knew that the two youths who assassinated the Austrian Crown Prince at Sarajevo had been hired to do it as agents of a plot by Serbians.

The answer to trick is trick. The Germans would escape their war debt by any ruse or evasion within the power of passive resistance. Peace brought no justice to the rising generation which sought it, as beaten people have ever sought it, through military preparation. A republic had taken the place of the constitutional monarchy of Bismarck's moulding, which was one way of making one part of the world safe for democracy. In its place came the harvest of the dragon's teeth which Bliss had told Mrs. Bliss that the Peace Conference was sowing. Young Germany rose in racial frenzy and blatant nationalism with its "Heil Hitler" of vassalage to absolute autocracy.

On June 7, more than two weeks before the signing of the Treaty, Bliss had written in a memorandum that he believed that Germany would be "more easily controlled and far less of a menace to the general peace if she is inside of the League of Nations rather than outside it." He would have her in just as soon as she had proved her good faith in the execution of the military and naval terms. Then, if she should prove in any way recalcitrant, the League could deal with her as a member. At the time he evidently had not lost hope that the League would function in keeping with its articles.

XXXVII

THE TREATY'S AFTERMATH

HAVING signed the Treaty of Versailles the departing heads of government left their colleagues and the committees a fractious aftermath of thorny problems which were to prolong the labors of the Conference for many months. Peace had been made with Germany; now peace must be made among the victors. There could not be enough Allies during the war; now they were distressingly numerous.

With the new frontiers of Germany delimited the lines had yet to be drawn definitely in the territorial rearrangements from Asia Minor to the Baltic. Many people were wondering whether they would live in the future under Lithuanian, Finnish, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Rumanian, Hungarian, Italian, Yugoslavian, Bulgarian, Greek or Turkish rule, or be citizens of the proposed free state of Constantinople or subjects in a country under one of the mandates provided by the Covenant of the League of Nations for the tutelary suzerainty of backward peoples, provisional for self-determination.

Bliss' occasional sense of mental isolation in the crowded Crillon, and in all the talky discussions and the goings and comings of negotiatory contacts and soundings, became downright loneliness at the prospect of his continued separation from Mrs. Bliss. Their affection was based upon a mutual understanding, enriched and mellowed by time. He was always in better humor with the tribulations of his work when he was near her. His associates said that he was "always talking about her," and if not, then about his daughter Eleanor. He might have glimpses of son Goring who was in France.

Upon his appointment as a peace delegate both he and Mrs. Bliss were informed by March that she might join him at once, since Mrs. Wilson and the wives of the other members of the Commission were going to Paris with their husbands. Mrs. Bliss' gay grandmother, of the days when Napoleon returned from his victories to Parisian triumphs, would have undoubtedly managed to be on the President's ship in order to miss no privilege in the inaugural functions to which a four-star general and a member of the Commission was entitled.

The dinners and receptions and the social celebration of the gathering of the victors of 1918 were very extensive if not so elaborate as the Congress of Vienna—which the Prince de Ligne said was “not moving but dancing”—with its succession of balls and fantastic entertainments, when only the appeal of the Empress of Austria prevailed upon a young count to shave off the pride of his heart, a handsome mustache, so he might play the part of Apollo, for which all the ladies declared he was pre-eminently fitted. Mrs. Bliss said she could not prepare to go so soon. Her health was frail, and her consciousness of her defective hearing contributed to her natural shyness at the prospect of meeting so many strange people, even if she had known French from childhood and, as the great-granddaughter of a sixth in a line of baronets, she might not feel quite outclassed by birth when she met anyone who came from her grandfather's native county of Sussex.

At first Bliss did not press her to come at once because he did not forget that he was still an army officer in uniform and still one of the military advisers to the Supreme War Council who had to enforce the armistice terms and to restrain some of the Allies whose efforts they had co-ordinated in 1918 from expending any reserve strength they had left in fighting one another in 1919. He had in mind that the rule against the wives of our officers or soldiers of the A.E.F. going to France was still in force. The wives of the personnel of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace might be moving about in the corridors of the Crillon, with army limousines at their disposal, but the wives of officers or soldiers, regular and reserve, might not join husbands who had been long in France and had crosses for valor and wound stripes as well as service stripes. It did not seem quite fair to Bliss that a general who had not been in the trenches should be an exception because he had been made an official peace delegate.

However, with time, “the old Spartan,” as he was sometimes called, found that the objection really no longer applied and his urgings began to appear in penciled appeals on the margins of the typed sheets of the diary which he forwarded to her. Through them she could learn just what he was doing every day, what progress the Conference was making, while he also sent her bundles of English and French newspapers and magazines. She had duties to look after, as

home persons always have, and she would wait a little until things were more quiet in Paris and enjoyable for quiet people. Eleanor should come when she had her summer holiday from the Geological Survey.

Bliss himself saw many of the great social functions as rather perfunctory and clearly he enjoyed much better little dinners with people he knew well, and tea and hours at the home of Robert Woods Bliss where he could be himself in responsive company. Both he and Pershing, as four-star generals, were free from the susceptibility of new American ministers and ambassadors fresh to the experience of the social flattery of the company of titled persons of the old world, which has ever been a handicap to our diplomacy. Being just as rooted in their soil as the titled persons in theirs they were not graciously inducted into affirmatives which drew them into byways off the main road of their purpose.

When Bliss went to the victory reception of the King of Italy given by the Italian ambassador and he saw how immense the crowd was, he bade his chauffeur drive on. Royal receptions had not the novel appeal for him of his younger days as attaché in Spain.

He remarked that there was dancing on another occasion, and he found it very stupid, which was unusual in a West Pointer at any age, according to accepted tradition. Again, he wrote that he was quite embarrassed at a huge affair because there was no table with cards giving the name of the lady he was to take in to dinner. He attached himself to a countess, but found that she was pre-empted by another man. He found that a princess was free, and she proved to be a most interesting person. But he told Mrs. Bliss that some princesses were bores. Just as in the case of other people, you could never tell until you met them how much they would bore you or you would bore them. All the numerous functions and the Allied exchange of felicitations and the presentation of medals had their gilt tarnished by his consciousness of the wrangling under the surface.

His fondness for ancient Greek seemed to make him a special object of the eloquence of the modern Greeks, including that of Eleutherios Venizelos.

"After the dinner Mr. Venizelos and Mr. Coromilas got me into a corner and for an hour filled me up with their views on the question of the Greek claims in Thrace and Asia Minor. After we were finished with this, we talked a little while about the Treaty in general. I said that our work on it showed the difference between finite and infinite power; because it took the good Lord only seven days to make the world and everything in it, while it has taken us eight months to remodel a comparatively small part of it. Mr. Coromilas said that in reality it took the good Lord much longer than seven days, because, he said, each of those days represented a geological era. I said that that was a good point for our guidance because it might be a good thing if we took a geological era to settle the Greek claims. They laughed but did not seem to take kindly to that idea."¹

Reports were coming in that the 60,000 Czechoslovak troops in Siberia, who were to have fought the Bolsheviks in the reconstruction of the eastern front, were now turning Bolshevik, and Admiral Koltchak wanted to get rid of them. Winston Churchill had "prepared a plan by which some 30,000 of them were to fight their way to Archangel to be repatriated by British shipping, while the remaining 30,000 were to work their way to Vladivostok and be repatriated by American shipping" at a time when we required every ship we had to bring home our soldiers and reestablish our commerce.

"But the demand is made that they must be replaced by a similar number of Allied troops. The British refuse to send any; so do the French; and so do the Italians. This leaves no one but the Americans and the Japanese. I was shown this afternoon a draft of a telegram prepared by my colleague at Versailles, General Sackville-West, proposed to be sent by the Council in identical terms to Japan and the United States. It asks each of these countries whether it will be willing to send 60,000 troops to replace the Czechoslovaks."²

So Bliss' habit of noes "without explaining" did not lapse for want of practice. He had to say No to Balfour with some explaining:

"Mr. Balfour then made the extraordinary statement that Clause I of the Armistice required the Hungarians to withdraw behind a certain line but did not pledge the Allies from advancing beyond that line. . . . At this, I replied that it did not require a military jurist to pass upon the meaning of Clause I of the armistice; that its meaning was determined by

¹ Bliss' diary, July 5, 1919.

² Ibid.

the definition of the word 'armistice'; that an armistice was the laying down of arms by both sides, neither advancing from an agreed-upon position while the plenipotentiaries arranged terms of final peace; that an armistice line which bound one side and not the other would, therefore, be an absurdity. . . . The Rumanians were going in for purposes of conquest."¹

On hot days in midsummer, as Bliss in his shirtsleeves worked his way through stacks of papers as thick as those that came to him when he was Chief of Staff, word would come to attend some committee meeting or to go to the Quai d'Orsay. After he was assured that he had his high collar properly hooked, he would square his shoulders, pick up his diminutive stick, light another cigarette and march forth. He wrote a sharp note on the absurdity of the Council of Six—it was Six at the time—keeping experts waiting two or three hours while they continued discussion among themselves on the subjects on which they wanted the expert advice, and then telling the experts to come tomorrow. He reports that at one of these gatherings one man said to another: "You needn't have come. I have written a letter on the subject." The reply was: "Yes, but you don't know what is in the letter. I wrote it for you and you signed it without reading it."

But there were few amusing incidents to relieve Bliss' impatience with the delays which were promoting more European disorder or building up false hopes, while at home public opposition to the Versailles Treaty became more manifest and the long discussion of it by the Senate had begun.

"Although I am busy, I don't see that I am accomplishing anything. Day after day I go to the Quai d'Orsay and hear discussed the same questions that have been discussed time and time again. On some questions their minds seem to be absolutely befogged. On others, their minds have been long made up—some for and some against—but they seem to have a strange reluctance to have a 'show down.' The most exasperating to me is the time that is wasted on subjects that don't in the least concern us. We are here as peace delegates, to make peace treaties with the enemy powers. But for one hour that is passed in discussing a clause in a treaty, whole days are passed in discussing Bolshevism, how support can be given to the Koltchak government at Omsk, how Bela Kun's government in Hungary can be overthrown, and so on until everyone is in a perfect muddle. And after all, they get nowhere.

¹ Bliss' diary, July 17, 1919.

"They have talked for days about sending an Allied army to Hungary, and we are going to talk again about it this afternoon at Quai d'Orsay. They are quite enthusiastic about it until it comes to the question of what nation or nations is to furnish the troops and foot the bills. Each one in turn says the United States must do it because we got into the war so late that we had only a relatively small number of men killed and that we must keep on fighting until our butcher's bill is as big as theirs! Then the American delegates say 'Nothing doing, unless Congress orders it.' Then they all look blankly at each other until a bright idea occurs to someone who proposes that they send a telegram to Bela Kun calling him a liar and a thief—at which they brighten up immensely, order the telegram sent, and then pass on to something equally inane and futile."¹

He was doubtful about the value of the many American commissions which were moving about Europe. Their presence often led to false expectations; they became involved in unavoidable partisanship in local situations. It would be better to bring them home. Anyhow, their expense should not be charged to the American Peace Commission. In answer to the calls for American army officers to play the same part as instructors in the new armies of the new nations that the French were playing in Poland, Bliss said that it was against our law that an American officer should serve in a foreign army. With reference to Poland he wrote in his diary, July 21, 1919:

"I found that I had known Major Ryan at El Paso when I was in command of the Southern Department, he at that time being connected with the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad. Mr. Hoover had sent him to Poland to try and introduce some order into the management of the railway systems in Poland so that our food supplies could be handled with more certainty. He tells me that Poland has gone war-mad and is trying to build up a great military establishment. She already has 2,500 French officers in her service. The French are encouraging Poland in this course believing that she will be a great military buffer state between Russia and Germany and extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Major Ryan tells me that there are no signs of concentration of the Germans against Poland which the latter have so often alleged. This statement coincides with what M. Clemenceau told us at a meeting later today at Quai d'Orsay. Major Ryan says that Poland is making the great mistake of handling her railroads as though they were a part of a military system in time of war and subordinating their economic use to their military use. Mr. Hoover says that he has already sent 100 locomotives and some 3,000 railway cars to Poland for use in handling his food supplies and that they were promptly taken possession of by the military for use on their Eastern front."

¹ Letter to Mrs. Bliss, July 17, 1919.

A quotation from Bliss' diary of July 25, 1919, was significant of the price that the vanquished were paying for the four years of war, while impoverished beneficiaries of victory took their turn in beginning their cycle of militarism:

"This morning, after a commission meeting, General Harbord, Pershing's chief of staff, came to see me about the matter of getting General Harries' mission out of Germany, and also getting authority to repatriate the 40,000 German prisoners of war now held by the Americans. In regard to the first case, General Harries is the American representative on the Inter-Allied Commission in Berlin to supervise the repatriation of the Russian prisoners. Some months ago the Germans had something over 600,000 of these prisoners. Under the terms of the armistice they repatriated about 400,000 of them. These went by train into Poland, but on arriving at the Polish front on the Bolshevik frontier, the local Polish commander refused to allow them to pass on the ground that they would be enrolled in the Bolshevik army on their front. They were, therefore, diverted into Lithuania, where the Lithuanians refused to receive them. They were thus shunted back and forth until their supplies were exhausted, and it appears that great numbers of them died.

"Meanwhile the Allies determined to stop the repatriation of these prisoners except in such a way that they would not form recruits for the Bolshevik army. As there were no ships to send them back by sea, as the Poles would not allow them to go through their territory, and as the fighting between the Poles and the Ukrainians closed all lines of transportation, it resulted in these prisoners being held in Germany. The Germans naturally demanded that they should be taken care of by the Allies and this was done by more or less equal division of the Russian prison camps in Germany between the English and the Americans. As a matter of fact the greater burden has fallen on the Americans and now the total personnel in Germany is three-fourths Americans. I told General Harbord that this question had been before the Military Representatives in Versailles, who had been directed to prepare a plan for the prompt repatriation of all these Russian prisoners. When their report is submitted, it will probably be accompanied by a British recommendation that a large number of these prisoners be still held in Germany because of their Bolshevik tendencies."

In this case Bliss said he would favor withdrawing our mission from Germany and leaving the care of the prisoners with the countries demanding their retention. In case the Military Representatives decided on immediate repatriation, then the American commission should take charge of the movement. He thought that the prisoners

should be allowed to go home to their own country. From all accounts they had had enough of soldiering and would not be of much use to the Bolsheviks. But if anything would make them Bolshevik, it would be the treatment they had received. Bliss' abhorrence of Bolshevism made him the more concerned about Allied actions which played into the hands of Bolshevik propaganda. A stable Germany was the best bulwark against it. In his diary of July 26, 1919, he wrote:

"After dinner I had an interesting conversation with the Marquis de la Ferronay, who is a member of the Chamber of Deputies from Brittany, and whose home is near Nantes. He regrets very much that the Peace Conference did not insist on dividing Germany up into her former states and thereby destroy her power as a great united nation. I told him that I did not believe that such a solution would be permanent, that it would be as impossible to keep the German nation from becoming united as it would be to keep the French from becoming united four or five hundred years ago. I said that I hoped that instead of continuing for all time to regard the Germans as natural enemies of everybody else, we would encourage them in their present democratic aspirations and restore them as the bulwark that they have always been between the Latin civilization along the Atlantic coast and the slavic civilization farther to the east."

A most pertinent telegram came from that capable and experienced diplomat, Hugh Gibson, the new American Minister at Warsaw, urging the necessity of a declaration of the Allied Powers as to whether Poland was in a state of peace or war. It was difficult for a peace conference to admit that the Poles were at war without encouraging further and more dangerous expression of martial emotion in a people suffering from the growing pains of nationalism, which it was hoped would normally exhaust itself.

From Poland the scene of further trouble shifted to Budapest, where the Rumanians were reported to be looting. Then it shifted to the eastern Mediterranean, which had recovered its classic importance in world counsels. Rival carving knives were grinding on one another in the dismemberment of Turkey in spheres of influence, mandates and annexations, it being taken for granted that the martial race which had once been before the walls of Vienna had no more life left than a carcass on a platter. Under a Byzantine spell Greece would be mistress of ancient Thrace; but her ambition in-

timately concerned the interests of the British, the French, the Italians and the Bulgars. More power for Greece, if acceptable to Britain, would be a barrier to the expansion of France and Italy as Mediterranean powers.

Bliss' hope that the President's personal detachment from Paris negotiations would bring decisions favoring prompt actions was somewhat dashed by the President's cable of July 28 to make both eastern and western Thrace a part of a new international state of Constantinople. In his diary Bliss said that "we all believe that to give western Thrace to Greece would result in even worse conditions than have resulted by giving Smyrna to Greece."

The President's proposal would "reinforce the declaration of the Greeks that the Americans want to receive a mandate for the new international state of Constantinople and that, therefore, the Americans want to make that state as big as possible." In this as in many instances our detached and arbitral part was always subject to the subtle implication that our plea of disinterested helpfulness masked some selfish interest. Admiral Mark L. Bristol, in command of our naval forces in the eastern Mediterranean, faced in his new part as our High Commissioner in Turkey more problems than Hugh Gibson as adviser to Poland. The Greeks wanted western Thrace as adjacent territory to connect up with eastern Thrace. These excerpts from Bliss' diary of July 28 are enlightening:

"Western Thrace has a large majority of Turkish population and it is to be noted that the Greek claim to this territory is largely based upon a statement purporting to be signed by eight Turkish members of the Bulgarian parliament to the effect that this Turkish population would rather be under Greek rule than Bulgarian rule. This declaration seemed to us to be very suspicious and we telegraphed to Mr. Wilson, our Chargé d'Affaires in Sofia about it. Today his telegram came saying that the entire document was forged; that it was written by one Mussulman member of the Bulgarian parliament who signed the names of seven other members to it. He has now fled the country and is supposed to have gone to Greece or Italy and the other seven members have officially denied the validity of their signatures. This cuts the entire ground from under the feet of the Greeks in their claim to the possession of Western Thrace. . . .

"We agreed that Dr. James Brown Scott and Dr. Douglas Johnson should prepare a formula to be discussed in the Council as a paragraph in the new treaty. This solution will undoubtedly be bitterly opposed by the British and French who seem determined that Western Thrace shall go to

Greece. Most of us believe that there was some previous secret agreement between those two governments and Greece which they are now trying to make good. The worst thing that could happen to Greece would be to give her Western Thrace, because at the first opportunity Bulgaria will surely fight to recover it. Thus far the Italians have been standing with the Americans, but there is reason to think that the Greeks are trying to make a deal with them about the Meander Valley in Asia Minor, likely between the present reoccupation at Smyrna and the Italian occupation farther south. It is one of the richest territories in Asia Minor and Greece may agree to let Italy occupy it if the latter will withdraw its objections to Western Thrace going to Greece. Before we are through with the Asia Minor question, I am afraid that it is going to prove the rottenest part of the treaty. They are all after mandates covering the entire territory except Armenia and Constantinople. None of them wants Armenia because the way they will probably draw its boundaries it will be about as barren a piece of land as can be found. They would each of them like to have Constantinople, but they distrust each other. Therefore, they want the United States to take mandate for Armenia and are reluctantly willing that she should take Constantinople. For them these mandates will prove nothing but disguised annexation."

Indeed, July 28 had been an example of a characteristically busy day for Bliss. His attention was again brought to another subject. Not only were the Russian prisoners in Germany still held nine months after the Armistice but so were the German prisoners in France. One view was that they should be kept on indefinitely as laborers in France to repair the damages they had done; another view that they were human beings who were entitled to return to their homes. Even the 46,000 taken by the Americans could not be legally repatriated yet.

"At 3:45 Dr. Zahle, representative of the Danish Red Cross, came to see me about the repatriation of the 46,000 German prisoners of which I have spoken. I explained to him that we purposed to approach the British and French with a view to seeing whether they will permit the repatriation of these prisoners in advance of the ratification of the Treaty by the required number of Allied Powers. Dr. Zahle told me pitiful stories of German prisoners (he has been visiting our prison camps) who told him of the condition of their families. One officer told him that two years ago (at which time he was a prisoner) he had received word that his wife was slowly dying of a cancer and could not live at the most more than two years. The two years are gone and he can receive no word from home and the poor man is almost insane from anxiety and worry. His case is one of many. This

question of the German prisoners since the time of signing the armistice is one of the most distressing, even the most abominable, that I know of during the war.”¹

Pershing did not wish to retain our soldiers in France to guard the prisoners and agreed with Bliss that they should be immediately repatriated. Clemenceau said they should be turned over to the French. Bliss and Pershing opposed this as contrary to international law and for humane reasons. Clemenceau remained resolute, at least until the ratification of the Treaty. Several of the Allies were delaying ratification of the treaty as cards in hand in satisfying their national ambitions, while the opposition in the United States Senate promised to postpone our ratification indefinitely for many months, if not to prevent it altogether. The question was referred to President Wilson who favored immediate repatriation with the approval of the Allies. Eventually, ten months after the armistice, the prisoners were returned, and also eventually the Russian prisoners who had survived reached Russia.

On August 4 General Tom Bridges brought serious word from the Caucasus:

“The British troops are withdrawing, and although it was agreed that the Italians should take their place, the latter do not intend to go in; neither do the French. As he describes the situation it means that massacres on a wholesale scale will begin in the near future unless the United States should agree to send troops there. Bridges says that one division will be sufficient. We are about to send General Harbord and a large mission of officers down there to investigate conditions. Bridges says that it is too late to do this and will simply result in a waste of all-important time. He says that the only solution is to send troops there at once.”²

Bulgaria also called for attention on the same day in a meeting at the Quai d'Orsay, which listened to the reports of Allied military observers who had come from Sofia.

“One thing that they all agreed on was that the Bulgarians had scrupulously lived up to all of the requirements of the armistice. This was somewhat of a bombshell in the camp of Mr. Balfour and M. Clemenceau. The latter called on Marshal Foch, evidently with the idea that Marshal Foch would support the contention that the Bulgarians had violated the

¹ Bliss' diary, July 28, 1919.

² Bliss' diary, August 4, 1919.

armistice. But the Marshal agreed with all the rest of the military men that the Bulgarians had done nothing of the kind. . . .

"Mr. Balfour and the other civilians had an idea that the armistice required them to come down to three divisions. That, however, is not 'demobilization' but 'reduction.' The cause of all their agitation now is the fact that they intend to impose upon Bulgaria peace terms that will probably throw that country into a blaze against Greece. At the present moment Bulgaria could probably soundly whip Greece and as the Allies do not intend to send any troops down there to help the latter, they are getting worried as to how they can enforce the proposed peace terms."¹

The next day, August 5, the British had seized Mesopotamia, where they had found great oil deposits which would be one reward for the costs in blood and money in their campaigns in the Near East. This was the reason they were abandoning the Caucasus and losing interest in the fate of the Armenians. The French were demanding Syria because the British had taken Mesopotamia, while the Italians and Greeks demanded their share.

But it seems superfluous to add further details to a record which is so well known and valuable as illustrating the wearing details of the reconstruction of Europe after four years of slaughter and destruction. Eventually the new nations of Central Europe and the Balkans were to settle down within their prescribed boundaries while they supported large armies for their defense. Turkey was to revive her martial spirit under a new leader and end the Greek dream of the restoration of the Byzantine empire.

It is worth while to mention an alarm—which was supported by information in a report, September 23, from our military attaché in Holland—that the German prisoners from Russia and the German veterans were being organized for an attack on France at the end of October. The Military Representatives, fully informed about the German situation, said the idea was preposterous, but it gained credence among those who believed the German military machine could be restored over night to its old power. Probably the rumor had its origin in the operations of the German forces in the Baltic provinces. On October 13 Bliss wrote to Major General Henry T. Allen, then commanding the American troops on the Rhine:

"The fear of Bolshevism caused the British to propose that the Germans should be left in the Baltic Provinces, until the Allies should order them

¹ Bliss' diary, August 4, 1919.

out, in order to check the advance of the Bolsheviks coming westward. This created an absolutely impossible situation and most of us realized it at the time. We asked the Germans to stay there and to spend their money and to sacrifice the lives of their troops for the benefit of the Allies. We may say, of course, that it was incidentally for the benefit of Germany also, but it was not proposed that Germany should reap any benefit from it. After the fear of the Bolsheviks should have disappeared, it was proposed to complete the cordon of new states hostile to Germany extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Most of us realized that if the Germans did well the work which we imposed upon them, it would help restore their prestige in that part of the world. But this restoration of prestige was the very thing that the Entente did not want. They knew that the better Germany did the work the more her prestige would be raised; and now a clamor has grown up against them because they did their work well and because their prestige is more or less restored. It has turned out exactly as most of us thought it would.

"Europe is confronted by enormous problems that will take a generation—perhaps several generations—to solve, and in the midst of Europe are these 60,000,000 or 70,000,000 Germans. The problems all center about Germany. Yet these short-sighted politicians think that they can solve these problems without the aid of the Germans. Germany has been the great bulwark of Western Europe against Slavonic and Oriental barbarism. She can only cease to be that bulwark by constituting herself the advance guard of that barbarism. Western Europe can defend itself against Bolshevism (or whatever evil follows Bolshevism) only by the aid of Germany. . . .

"If the Spartacist movement should prove to be as strong as some believe it is becoming, and if the forces of the German government should prove powerless against it, it means the military occupation of all of Germany. Who is going to do this? The British have demobilized their army to its peace strength and many of their officers believe that it is not strong enough to meet its obligations in the different parts of the world under British control. They have no one to spare for the purpose of an occupation on a large scale. Will England pass a new draft law to raise 1,000,000 men to go into Germany? I doubt it.

"I doubt whether the United States would go into Germany to put down a Spartacist insurrection any more than it seems willing to go into Russia to put down a Bolshevik insurrection. This would leave the problem to be met by France and she would have to mobilize a couple of million men. Can she do this? There are many who think that she cannot and will not. And who will pay the bill? I am sure that a loan could not be floated for that purpose in the United States. What becomes of the reparation for past damages in France and Belgium? The money for this will be eaten up by the occupation."

This was another example of Bliss' consistency of policy and conviction that no real permanent peace could be based upon the old system of reprisals and revenge. His heartbreak was in the daily evidence that came to his desk that the system was being perpetuated.

But he could rejoice in fresh hope when Clemenceau in the French Senate "uttered words of wisdom which I wish could be borne into the minds of all Frenchmen and all their Allies in Europe. He said very bluntly, in substance, that the future security of France depended upon good relations with Germany and in stopping the preaching of the doctrine of irreconcilable hatred. I cannot conceive truer words." That hardy old warrior, too, would have the war over; but this liberal sentiment was not acceptable to his countrymen, and soon he was to be shifted from the political scene to retirement.

By this time Bliss was not so lonely. Eleanor had come in August. And after Eleanor had gone Mrs. Bliss came for the quiet time for which she had waited after the excitement was over. That ended the diary for good. History was the loser when she was with him, but he was not. She met the friends he had made; they browsed together in the bookstalls along the Seine; she visited the grave of her grandmother in Père la Chaise; they made tours to the places she wanted to go, including the homes of the French relatives. But he did not take her to the devastated regions. He would have her see more pleasant scenes. He complimented her on her French accent which was so superior to his own, although she did not know some of the slang of Paris he had picked up; and he was ready to confess how he had missed his opportunities when it appeared that she knew more about the history of some landmarks than he, although he had been a year in France.

Meanwhile, his position had become officially more difficult owing to the attitude of the United States Senate. His Allied colleagues now saw the nation which had mothered the League of Nations repudiating its own child. The President, who had labored so hard to bring other countries into the League, could not even bring his own. America appeared as playing the moral censor and geographic arbiter of Europe without accepting any responsibility for the policies she had

sought to impose on Europe. We were a strange people with a strange President and Senate to the Europeans, who, however, seemed a strange people to us. The Asiatics seemed strange to both, and both strange to the Asiatics.

"On October 14 (I think that was the date) I received a telephone message from your Embassy which, on account of the bad working of the telephone, I could not fully understand. So far as I understand it it is related to some conference which it was proposed to hold, on which I was to represent the United States, to pass upon the question in controversy between the British, French and Arabs relating to certain military occupations in Syria. I also understood, over the telephone, that the Emir Feisul or a representative of him would be in Paris within two or three days thereafter and that I would then learn the details.

"It seems that last Saturday a representative of Feisul came to see Mr. Polk and the latter, a day or two afterwards, told me the substance of the interview. From it I gathered that Feisul wants an American representative on the conference to act, practically, as an arbitrator; because he would not accept any decision arrived at solely by the British and French. . . .

"Now that the censorship has been removed, the French newspapers discuss the Syrian question with the most brutal cynicism. A leading article signed by a French Academician and published in one of the principal newspapers some three days ago, frankly says that what the French now demand in the way of military occupation is only 'a first step on the threshold.' I do not think that there can be any doubt but that the future mandates for Turkey-in-Asia are now being settled by the various military occupations which we are permitting without protest. If we allow things to go as they are now going, the only possible mandate that could be offered to the United States will be that of a barren Armenia stripped of everything that could make an economically self-supporting state.

"Early in the year, when the general principle of mandates in the Covenant (then being formulated) of the League of Nations was being discussed, I dined with some British friends at the Hotel Majestic. I remember that there were present at the table, among others, Lord Robert Cecil and Colonel Lawrence, the latter a friend and adviser of Feisul. I was asked what I thought would be the American feeling toward this general question of mandates. I replied that I did not know nor had had, as yet, any opportunity of learning. But I added that my own opinion was that wherever a mandate covered oil wells and gold mines Great Britain would get it; and that the United States would be asked to take a mandate over all of the rock-piles and sand-heaps that might be left. As things are going now this is all that we will get, if we are willing to take anything."¹

¹ Letter to John W. Davis, Ambassador to Great Britain, October 22, 1919.

But the news from home told him that the Congress, when we had not yet completed our mission in the Philippine archipelago, was in no mood to accept mandates on the mainland of Asia. Our energies were not sufficiently crowded at home, as those of European countries were, to give us surplus to expend in this fashion in the distances.

When word came from Lansing, who was now back at his desk in the State Department in Washington, that the Serbian minister there had asked the American naval commander in the Adriatic "to prevent any eventual attempt at landing at Spalato by the Italian forces under Captain d'Annunzio," Bliss might have referred back to his advice nine months ago against our becoming embroiled in the dispute between the Italians and the Yugoslavians. Our naval force there had been sent as part of an international force to police certain areas until the Peace Conference had determined the limitations of sovereignty on the Dalmatian coast.

"I understand that the French and British naval forces have been withdrawn. Has the Council of the Powers at Quai d'Orsay formally designated the United States Naval Forces, and with the consent of the latter Government, as the representative of the naval forces that have withdrawn? If that is not the case, it seems to me quite clear that the United States, in continuing to authorize the American naval commander to exercise his former functions, is acting, not as one of the Allied and Associated Powers but in an entirely independent capacity.

"If, therefore, the American naval commander retains his forces at Spalato and, in case of seizure of that place by the Italians, makes the protest which is suggested by Mr. Lansing,—to whom will he make that protest? Manifestly, to the Government at Washington. But, the Secretary of State will, in all probability, know of the seizure of Spalato before he receives the protest of our naval commander. It is not usual for our Government, unless it intends to take some decided measures, to station its war vessels in front of a port where some act of spoliation may be committed by another power, merely for the purpose of making a protest against such an act. It can make its protest just as quickly from its seat of government.

"Moreover, what would be the next step after the filing of a protest by the local American naval commander? Obviously he can do nothing but lift anchor and sail away. Were he to remain he and his forces would be exposed to incidents that might have the most serious results.

"My conclusion is that we are not only not doing any good but are merely fomenting trouble with our small, independent naval force in the

Adriatic. Our presence there only encourages the Serbians to believe that we will help them. If we are not going to go to war in their behalf, but shall content ourselves with making a protest, it seems to me that we had better so inform the Serbian Government and tell it that we will make this protest as soon as the act which they apprehend has been committed." ¹

Reports had reached the Senate lobby and been spread through the country that the Treaty had not been acceptable to all our five Peace Commissioners. The answer to this should come from the Commissioners. A statement was brought to Bliss for joint signature that they "heartily and unreservedly" approved of all the "provisions of this important document." Bliss said his conscience would not permit him to sign this because he had written a letter to the President against the Shantung concession and there were other provisions which he did not approve. All he would say was that the Treaty was "the best that conflicting interests and beliefs made possible" ² in order to be helpful to the President and in the hope of hastening peace.

Bliss wrote a letter to Polk, October 14, which may well be taken in connection with his suggestion, just before the President's return to Paris in March, that the United States should make a definite declaration of its policy about further participation with soldiers and funds in Allied enterprises. As a result of our uncertain attitude the personnel of the Commission still remaining in Paris was subject to much embarrassment, as were the Allies who had made plans on the basis of aid which we could not give. "The Treaty having been ratified by three of the Great Powers, it seems quite certain that it will go into operation in a few days," but it would not be known until well into November what the action of our Senate would be.

"All of this would be of little concern to us if, after having signed the Treaty with Germany, we had withdrawn ourselves from all participation, even speculative, in the execution of the Treaty and we were now passively waiting for our Government to decide what it intends to do.

"But, the beginning of the operation of the Treaty with Germany seems likely to find the Americans still here and with representation on the Council of the principal Allied and Associated Governments. We will

¹ Letter to Frank L. Polk, Counsellor of the State Department (who had taken Lansing's place in Paris), November 30, 1919.

² Memorandum to House, September 16, 1919.

still be at war with Germany. What part can we play in a body of men who are engaged in the execution of a treaty of peace with that country? . . .

"At various times I have submitted memoranda to the President of the United States and to the American Peace Commission calling attention to the fact that plans were being constantly formulated here which never would have been formulated except for the belief of our Allies that, in the last resort, the United States would furnish the men, the money and the supplies necessary to carry the plans into effect. I have stated that in my opinion the wisest and most humane thing the United States could do would be to make a declaration (and it ought to have been made long ago) to the effect that the United States would contribute neither money nor men nor supplies for further wars in Europe. Had this been done I believe that peace would be far more stabilized in Europe than is now the case. Nevertheless, there is much that the Americans can do toward securing and maintaining this peace.

"I began with the assumption that the permanent peace, even the fate of Europe, depends upon the continuance in power of the present government in Germany. That government is as democratic a one as could possibly be expected to be created on the ruins of the former empire. Everyone familiar with the history of France knows that for some years after the downfall of the Third Empire the reactionary party here was very strong and at times even dominant. The present government of Germany is probably as democratic as that of France from 1871 to 1875. As in the case of France, so in the case of Germany, everything depends upon keeping that government in existence until it can solidify itself and work out its own salvation.

"There are only two alternatives to the present form of government. If this one falls it may be succeeded by a reactionary, that is to say, a monarchical government; or it may be followed by a Spartacist, that is to say, a Bolshevik government. Surely, the Allies in Europe must have every interest in maintaining the present government rather than to see either of its only two possible successors come into power."

He was concerned about the public clamor of the Allies for the arrest and trial of German culprits when, in fact, Germany now had a republican form of government, which had been our aim in the war as a future guarantee against the return of German militarism. The arrests might lead to a critical period after the Allied Commissions had begun their inspections in Germany. The Allies might be in the position of having to occupy Germany by brute force. Who would undertake this? Not the French, the British, nor the Italians who were being demobilized.

Surely not the American soldiers who, except for the force on the Rhine and a few units scattered about France on various duties, were now at home. Their widely disseminated advice "to get out and stay out of Europe" had been welcome to the "irreconcilables" of the Senate who, after a parliamentary struggle as bitter as that of the Italians and the Yugoslavs over the Dalmatian coast, had won their first victory by voting down the ratification of the Treaty and adjourning, thus forcing Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's resolution declaring peace to exist between the United States and Germany over until the next session, March 4, when Congress next assembled. So, one year after the Armistice, we were still officially at war with Germany, while the sick President set his stubbornness and profound convictions against those of the irreconcilables who found public opinion rising in their support. And we were still at war with Germany when the Senate rejected the Treaty, March 19, 1920. The Allies made better time by the official exchange of ratifications, January 10, 1920, fourteen months after the Armistice.

All this serves to revive memory of that prolonged debate as a background for one of Bliss' most interesting papers, into which he put all his power of reasoning, his heart and his talents as a unifier, and which must have been the product of much pacing in soliloquy. The title he gave it was "An Imaginary Letter to Two Prime Ministers," and it was subject to much painstaking revision in his study of the right words and phrases to make his logic carry conviction. As a subordinate to his own nation's governmental chief he might not send such an appeal direct to other governmental chiefs. Apparently he began it for his own satisfaction with no thought that it would ever see the light.

Then he concluded that it might be made the basis of a conversational approach to Lloyd George and Clemenceau, for whom it was obviously intended, as suggesting a way to hastening the end of the cruel and unnecessary delay for all the peoples concerned in the recovery from the most destructive war of history. He showed the letter to Polk, who asked him to show it to Lord Derby, the British Ambassador in Paris, who asked him in turn to send a copy to Lord Curzon, now the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Then Bliss, becoming more emboldened, sent a copy to John W. Davis, our Ambassador in London, with this covering letter of December 8:



HARRIS & EWING

OLD AGE
With His Granddaughter Betty Bliss

"If there be any hope of saving the situation, I feel quite sure that it rests with the heads of governments here. I do not believe that anyone but they can break the deadlock in Washington and, of course, it is a very delicate matter for them to show any hand in it. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the President's attitude must be due to one or the other of two motives. Either he is convinced that any reservation to the Treaty would be unacceptable to his associates here and that, therefore, out of loyalty to them he must fight such reservations to the end; or, he may feel that the document as it stands is so exactly right that he cannot consent to any modifications whatever. Perhaps there may be a third motive growing out of his belief that these reservations would result in an encroachment on the proper powers of the executive in matters of foreign relations. If his associates here could make known that they accept most of the reservations I should think that he might withdraw any objections to them. If he should do so, I think there must be a considerable number of senators who, while they want the reservations, also want the Treaty. If they can get most of the reservations and thereby have the Treaty there might be a change of votes which would put it through."

He began his letter to the prime ministers by referring to their statements of grave concern over the failure of the Senate to ratify the Treaty. Then he gave an impartial view of the lines of conflict drawn in the Senate and added that the future peace of Europe was surely of "far more vital interest to you than the meaning and effect of a number of reservations possibly could be." Eight of the fourteen reservations related exclusively to the League of Nations and two more to it in part. The Covenant was not an essential part of the Treaty and could be separated from it.

"The object of these treaties is to bring an end to the present state of war; the object of the Covenant of the League is to provide a check against further wars, but no more with our recent enemies than with our present friends. The Covenant could be cut from the treaties, with the understanding that we will subsequently negotiate a treaty embodying it, without causing you the slightest concern."

Surely, Bliss reasoned, both Lloyd George and Clemenceau wished to preserve the League which they had publicly favored. Then, taking up each reservation in turn, Bliss showed why those about the League might be accepted without weakening the power of the League—as he conceived the limitations which practice would put

upon its ambitions in its early youth—and why those that did not relate to the League might be accepted.

“ . . . The United States shall be the sole judge as to the fulfilment of ‘its international and all its obligations under the Covenant.’ Will not that be, *in practice*, the attitude that will be taken by your own governments? How can any one of the Great Powers be forced, without war, to remain in the League because of some other government’s construction of its obligations? Is it not evident that a refusal by you to accept this reservation would show that the very first clause in the Covenant may prove a cause of war rather than a check against it? Will it not be better, in view of your fear of a total failure of the Treaty, to trust to the common sense and general intelligence of the United States to take a proper attitude when the contingency occurs, and to assume that when the United States judges that its obligations have been fulfilled you will also agree that they have been fulfilled?”

The prime ministers must know quite well that no law could override the Constitution and that a treaty was “under and not over the Constitution.” As for mandates, how could the United States determine except by action of Congress whether it would accept one? As for the fourth reservation, Bliss asked:

“Do you intend to surrender your present right to pass upon all questions which are within your domestic jurisdiction? Do you intend to give other nations the unlimited right to decide how many hours of labor shall constitute a day’s work? or how many francs or shillings shall constitute the compensation for such a day’s work? Do you intend to surrender your present right to regulate the immigration of aliens into your country? to regulate your coastwise traffic? to regulate your tariff? etc., etc. If not, what objection have you to the Fourth Reservation?”

As for the reservation about the Monroe Doctrine:

“It will require a united Europe to call that Doctrine into question with any hope of success; and it will be better for you, from the point of view of your own interests, to secure the successful operation of the Treaty with Germany in order that when, in some future and distant year, you call the Monroe Doctrine into question you may have a united and not a Balkanized Europe behind you.”

The sixth, eighth and twelfth reservations, the sixth affecting Shantung, did concern the integrity of the Treaty: “But if, in respect

to all the others, you take the attitude suggested, you will have taken the surest course to secure a compromise by which these reservations may be eliminated." And everyone knew very well there was no great enthusiasm among the major nations with Far Eastern interests in the allocation of Shantung to Japan, which he had vigorously opposed.

Could there be any objection by Lloyd George and Clemenceau to the United States following its habitual practice in requiring the Senate's confirmation of the representatives appointed to the League Council and Assembly by the President? In turn, there could be little fault found with the ninth reservation which provided that the expenses for the League and the execution of the Treaty should be subject to Congressional appropriation when "every citizen of the United States understands that by no possibility can a penny of public funds be withdrawn from the Treasury except in pursuance of an appropriation law."

"The Tenth Reservation reserves to the United States the right to increase its armaments without the consent of the League should the United States find itself threatened with invasion or engaged in war. Is there any nation which will construe the provisions of Article 8 of the Covenant in any other way, no matter whether it has made a reservation or not?

"The Eleventh Reservation reserves to the United States the right to permit, in its discretion, the nationals of a covenant-breaking State who reside within the United States or in countries other than the covenant-breaking one, to continue their commercial, financial and personal relations with the nationals of the United States. This does not, as some have assumed, limit the power of the League to impose a blockade upon the covenant-breaking State."

Although he may have had it in mind, Bliss did not suggest that no powerful nation would be able to coerce its citizens to full obedience of this article. The thirteenth reservation only withheld assent until the Congress had provided for representation in the labor organization to be established.

With reference to the fourteenth reservation, which gave a vote in the League Assembly to each of the self-governing commonwealths in the British Empire as well as to the United States, Bliss did not believe that the revision of Article XV, which was in question, was immediately necessary.

"The success of the League of Nations depends upon all its members entering it with confidence in the ultimate sense of justice of the entire body. It will be observed that the Fourteenth Reservation does not declare that the United States will not be bound by any obligation arising from the action of the Council or Assembly after the casting of votes as indicated above. It *reserves* the right to decline the obligation in case injustice results. Why cannot the nations of the League assume that it will be a long time before even an attempt at injustice toward the United States would be made? . . .

"It seems unlikely that the present deadlock in the United States Senate can be broken except by a compromise. This compromise will involve the retention of some reservations and, perhaps, the modification of some others. This compromise cannot be made so long as the President believes that no reservations will be acceptable to you, or until you indicate to him what reservations, modified or not, you will accept. Millions of people in the United States, who think about the Treaty at all, believe in these reservations solely for the reason that they are afraid that they are not acceptable to you. If they are not acceptable to you they believe that the clauses of the Treaty to which they relate contain some hidden meaning concealed from the American representatives and which, if known, would not have been accepted by them. . . .

"The American people is earnest in its sincere desire to have peace and would have it under the general terms of the proposed treaty. Surely, in such an enormous document, affecting such a multitude and such a variety of subjects, it is a matter of wonder that a great nation, whose interests are so vitally affected and whose traditional policy is so rudely shocked, has found occasion to make so few reservations. The larger proportion of them do not affect the Peace Treaty with Germany at all. They can safely be left to be worked out by the League of Nations when it comes into existence. If you really wish the Peace Treaty to be ratified by the United States, it is possibly easily within your power to accomplish it."

In view of Bliss' high standing, surely Lord Curzon must have shown this letter to Lloyd George who had once been so grateful for Bliss' support of which he availed himself in the Commons in a critical moment of his premiership; and it would seem very likely that Clemenceau had been apprised of it or of suggestions of the same nature. Surely, at the time when the major nations were still giving much vocal approval of the League and its promise as an agent of future peace, the leaders of Great Britain and France could not have forgotten America's aid in the war—granting, as they were to contend later, that it was only financial, commercial and moral—or forgotten the concessions that the President had made for the

League. But, as war taxes pressed national shoulders with burdens they must bear for generations, they were already thinking of the additional weight imposed by their war debts to the United States, which seemed to be strutting rather patronizingly in the wealth and power the war had brought to us, although we did not seek indemnities or territory.

Already the wings of the League, which the idealists would give it, were being clipped and the teeth, which all the partisans of arbitrary sanctions would give it, were being drawn inconspicuously if not painlessly under the anesthetic of confidential diplomatic understandings. For the same reason that the great leaders of the Powers had met to decide on the armistice terms without a formal meeting of the Supreme War Council, now these giants, as Bliss had predicted, were disinclined to submit their own destinies and the destiny of Europe to the parliamentary assembly of the smaller nations which could outvote them. It is questionable if the gentlemen to whom an elderly American army officer addressed his imaginary letter did not prefer that the United States should be out of the League and thus precluded from meddling in the affairs of Europe which Europe, out of quite a lengthy experience, would rather conduct in her own time-honored fashion.

So Bliss' last important public document as an official, with its conception which was so notably in keeping with his character and which time was to justify, fell upon barren soil, as did similar proposals. What more was there for him to do after the thinning ranks of the Commission's personnel had left him as one of a small rear guard?

Never had orders relieving him from present duty been more welcome. He received them two years after he had started back to Washington in December, 1917, with his report to Baker in the crisis which must hasten our men to France and Allied coördination to save the war from being lost.

His desk was clear of the last paper. He would not be blowing off steam again to Grant, Wallace or Browning. He thanked them in letters as he had all the others of his little army. If theirs had not been a spectacular part in the quiet office at Versailles, they had come to be relied upon "for their impartiality and fairness" in bringing about harmony among the Allies. If they had not had ac-

tive command they had their part in the victory in the war. They had striven equally hard for victory in the crowded Crillon of the Peace Commission.

The day for departure came. Grant and Wallace were there. But where was chauffeur Casey? Where was Bliss' car? He had written as warm a letter of thanks to Casey as to his officers, but he was not through with Casey yet. He learned that the car had been turned in. He asked Grant to send for it when it would have appeared more in character for him to say, "There are taxis." But this time the four-star general, who took so little interest in the honors due his rank, had a sentimental turn for a little "side." He and Mrs. Bliss would ride to the station in his own car with its four-star flag. His Casey and his car were found.

Colleagues of many nations were at the station to say farewell. He had a warm embrace from Foch, who probably owed him more than to any other man, except Clemenceau, for having been made generalissimo, and whom he had told many times that he was talking nonsense.

XXXVIII

RICH AND MELLOW YEARS

THE refined test of a man's character may come with his retirement from active affairs when he no longer has power and may not again anticipate it in his occupation or profession. To say that he grows old gracefully is a tribute to his good manners and to his sense of proportion which make him agreeable to his relatives and younger people. A broader criterion is how he uses his leisure, whether he allows his mind to go to rust or he keeps it as a bright and shining tool which remains the most precious part of himself, and in how he ripens and mellows. He may strive to appear young physically when he knows he cannot be young again or he may keep the spirit of youth alive in his weakening body through the reflection of the light in the eyes of youth around him. Great men sometimes fail to be great in their old age while men of mediocre and even humble careers succeed.

Bliss had now entered his sixty-seventh year. In the process of demobilizing the immense army of 1917-18, which set generals back to the rank of colonels and majors of regulars, he would automatically pass on to the retired list, free to do as he pleased.

Upon his return to Washington he wrote his final report on his service on the Supreme War Council from which several quotations have been made. But he was not to have official leisure after this was finished. He was appointed Governor of the Soldiers' Home which is in the environs of Washington. So he and Mrs. Bliss did not have yet to consider the question where they would settle down for the remainder of their days. The administrative work of the Home was not onerous compared to other positions Bliss had held, but he was far from accepting it as a sinecure. It gave him quiet and relative rest after the Chief of Staff's office, Versailles and the Peace Conference. With the memory of the war still fresh in the public mind and resulting controversies still heated, his loyalties were touched by the attacks on the League of Nations. He might not have approved of the Covenant as finally adopted, but he wrote:

"We whipped Germany not for the mere sake and pleasure of whipping her, but in order to destroy an iniquitous system and to bring about a better condition in the world. . . . As it is now there are more soldiers in Europe than there were at the beginning of 1914, and the result of it all is, apparently, that the world is going to stagger under an enormous debt resulting from a military system which we hoped to destroy and go on piling up that debt for the indefinite future, for the maintenance of a military system worse than the one which caused the war. When I went abroad in 1917, had I asked the average man on the street in Philadelphia 'Why are you sending your son to the war?' I think he would have said, 'It is because I hope by this present sacrifice to put an end to a system which, if not ended, will force the United States to do what the nations of Europe are doing and which will keep the fear of war hanging over me and my children's children.' Now that we have rejected the Treaty and the League of Nations, I would like to know the answer that the average man on the street would now give to the question, 'What do you think that you have gotten out of the war for the sacrifice which you made?' All that I can see that we have obtained is that we have in the first year of peace after the war an appropriation bill nearly five times as large for the support of a military establishment as it was on April 1, 1917, and a similar appropriation bill for a naval establishment. But the subject is too disheartening to talk more about it."¹

Americans who regretted that the Allied armies had not marched to Berlin thought they had support for their convictions in that he had demanded unconditional surrender, while the other extreme group of opinion even had the idea that he was a ruthless soldier who insisted upon further bloodshed for the sake of reprisal.

"So far from protesting against an armistice I fully agreed with Marshal Foch that if we could secure an armistice that made it impossible for Germany to resume the war, to be followed by a peace that would still further guarantee this impossibility, it would be nothing short of wanton murder to refuse it. Nor, in the history of war, do I know of any civilized nation, even in a war with the worst savages, refusing an armistice for the purpose of making peace. It may impose as hard armistice terms as it chooses, but if those terms are accepted by the enemy the civilized nation would, if it refused the armistice, put itself on a level with the savage."²

He shared the mood of all who had been in the war of wanting to forget it forever, only to find that he could not forget it when

¹ Letter to Dr. W. W. Keen, March 27, 1920.

² Letter to George W. Edmonds, Representative in Congress, October 26, 1922.

its effects persisted in all our lives. When Paul Cravath, with whom he had been associated on the House Mission and later abroad, asked his opinion about a book, *The Pomp of Power*, by an anonymous author, he wrote:

"If anybody knows the truth about anything he had better tell it, and tell it over his own name. Most of what I have seen is either a false statement of facts or false inferences from facts. Anonymous writings give me the impression that they are written by people whose names, if known, would stamp the books as non-authentic. If I were to live indefinitely, it would be with the hope that I would hear nothing about the war or the so-called peace that followed it for the next hundred years. I would really like, at the end of that time, to know what people thought about them."¹

His devotion to fair play and his loyalty to his commander-in-chief brought a very sturdy response when he was asked why President Wilson had not stood firm against the other heads of governments. Bliss put himself in the President's place. The President had gone to Paris to negotiate and in negotiations you have to make compromises. The President had had to yield in order that the others would yield and not break up the Conference. If the League kept on doing good, "however much less than we had hoped," it would be to "Mr. Wilson's eternal glory" whether we were in it or not.

"And if Geneva fails it will only prove that in 1919 Mr. Wilson was not dealing with business men around a table, but with rogues and tricksters who can chuckle over the idea that they have 'bamboozled the old Presbyterian' at the very time that their civilization is rocking under their feet. In spite of any mistakes made, Mr. Wilson did what was *practicable* to save that civilization. . . . If it had been Homer's 'Gods in Council' perhaps it would have been different. But even they had their differences. And Olympian Zeus himself had sometimes to yield."²

He was far from abdicating the functions of his mind, far from the attitude which was reported to be that of one of his distinguished colleagues on the Supreme War Council.

"I am sorry to learn the impression he made on you as being a 'lonely and disappointed man.' That may be one of the not infrequent results

¹ Letter to Paul Cravath, September 20, 1922.

² Letter to Mark Sullivan, November 26, 1922.

of age, for he must be getting on in years. But, like Homer's hero, he 'has seen the cities and known the minds of many men'; and that, in my experience, is one of the many pleasures, as Cicero found, that compensate advancing years for their lost youth. . . . But, of course, there may be troubles in any man's life which, unless he 'wears his heart upon his sleeve,' no one else knows about. If that is the case with him he has my pity and sympathy because 'to endure with fortitude what cannot be helped is easy to say but hard to do.'"¹

When Clemenceau and Foch visited America to receive their triumphs as victors Bliss was called upon for speeches introducing them at banquets. He paid touching and graceful tributes to Clemenceau, the father of victory, to Foch, the generalissimo of victory, referring to Foch's deep religious faith which took him in the early morning to the nearest church for prayer. But Bliss disclaimed the eloquence attributed to him on these occasions.

"It wasn't a speech. I was asked to introduce M. Clemenceau. Of course I was expected to say something nice about him or else keep my mouth shut. I have a sort of feeling of love for the old man because I was thrown with him quite intimately for two years and I couldn't help liking and admiring him in those days—as, in fact, I do still. I had only a couple of minutes to speak and I wanted to get hold of the sympathy of his audience (which was a very distinguished one) for him. Of course, if you can get hold of that sympathy almost anything 'goes' and sounds well at the moment. But afterwards, when you haven't got the crowd and you haven't the old man in front of you and you *read* what was said—why, that's very different."²

The fact that he was "good on his feet" inevitably led to calls for speeches and to become one of the "signers" or eminent citizens who give their names to dignify causes and petitions and various public undertakings. He would be neither the figurehead nor the director of any organization in which he had not the time to take an active interest to enable him to know just what it was doing. Such refusals are numerous in his papers always for the same reason. Once he objected to one of his proposed colleagues in a new peace movement because, "as an American citizen" he did not wish to be associated with the man, although aside from the qualities to which

¹ Letter to Paul Cravath, May 31, 1923.

² Letter to General W. W. Atterbury, December 24, 1922.

Bliss objected doubtless the man had many others that had won esteem and a following.

Scholars were learning that Bliss was a scholar, which seemed to some people rather surprising in an army officer, when army officers, as a matter of fact, have a real opportunity for broad study when their duties are not heavy, since their pay is fixed and, small as it is, they are free from the worries of the civilian to keep his income up to his needs. In that era when the partisans of the League and its opponents continued their battle, when the horror and destruction of the war haunted us as a demon of yesterday's ordeal, and there was a conflict of proposals as to how to prevent its repetition, it was learned that here was a soldier of high rank who was opposed to war. This was also surprising to some people, especially to those who had not actually experienced war as soldiers have in the fullness of its waste, folly and slaughter.

To extreme pacifists he appeared as a reformed practitioner who had turned or half-turned against his own profession. But thoughtful people found in him a man who knew his subject to the depths, who was far from a convert, but who had long been a convinced and practical apostle, hewing the way of his logic, without illusions.

His addresses and articles on war and peace in the last ten years of his life form a fitting crown to his career. One wonders why they have not been published as a text for the teaching of youth and for all who seek the solution of the eternal and supreme problem; and one hopes that they will be yet, not only an encouragement for all who would keep up the battle but as safeguard against errors in plans of campaign which seem to be new, when they are really old, and which lead to misspent energy and to the disillusionment of inevitable defeat. His thought was so integrated in his formal addresses, as they are in many of his letters, that excerpts are very difficult. Each paragraph is only one link in a chain of reasoning. Leave out only one link and the chain is broken, while many listeners may have been disappointed at the absence of outstanding phrases of journalistic appeal. The author, in restricting himself to some excerpts which appear luminous, relies on the body of Bliss' actions and views already recorded as sufficient background.

Disappointed in his hope of disarmament through the Treaty, Bliss made it his cause after his return home. At times his views

may seem inconsistent. Pacifists said that to scratch him deep was to reveal the militant soldier; militarists that it revealed the pacifist. He was quite conscious of this charge of inconsistency, which did not disturb him as a searcher for the truth.

"I would not take a single step in the way of disarmament," he wrote, "except as the result of an agreement, thoroughly acceptable to us, between ourselves and the other principal nations engaged in armament rivalry."¹ He said he had no scheme. He would have a conference of the nations on the subject. Before President Wilson left the White House he wrote a letter to Baker suggesting that the President call an arms conference. Later he rejoiced in the Washington Arms Conference in which America took the lead by agreeing to naval ratios instead of proceeding with her program which would have made her the first naval power. It was a good start. He hoped for much from it. His country had at least shown its faith in deeds.

To Americans, who would assure the protection of France by allowing her army to remain in occupation of the Rhine frontier, he said that it would be signing the death warrant of France.

"For her to attempt to absorb, under any guise whatever, the eight or ten millions of the most intense Germans in Europe who live west of the Rhine, who breed at least three children that reach maturity, while France breeds less than two, would be fatal. It would realize the fable of the Spartan boy with the stolen fox under his cloak which gnawed out his vitals while he refused to acknowledge his theft.

"After all, the problem is better considered from the point of view of the future than of the present. When France is threatened by Germany in the next or a succeeding generation, it can only be by a revived Germany. That will be a Germany of perhaps a hundred million Germans and a France of forty millions—or less. The latter's salvation must—if the civilized, Christian world is to be governed by force—be in an alliance. But alliances make strange bedfellows. The present treaty contemplates the exaction of its terms from Germany for the next forty years. That was its crowning folly. Who can tell whether it will then be an alliance of England and America with France? Who can guarantee the continuance of the present sentiment? And what about the alliance on the other side? Study the growth of the Alliances and Ententes on *both* sides after 1871! While England and America join France, every country in Europe that, for good or bad reasons, dislikes any one of the three will begin to incline again toward Germany. The proposition to save France in that way (so

¹ Letter to the Church Peace Union's Committee on the Reduction of Armaments, March 27, 1921.

long as she is unable to save herself) means another world war. And what that will mean God alone knows.

"My own opinion is that neither France nor any other nation in similar case can be saved from ultimate destruction in that way. If the rule of force is to continue our main reliance, and if Europe really wants France to be saved, Europe can do it without our help; and if Europe doesn't want her saved I doubt whether, as you look a long time in the face, our help will save her. Don't you think that it is time for us to devote our energies and our reason to devise some other way?" ¹

At times he became weary of all the many short cuts proposed when to him the World Court, the limitation of armaments and real constructive work by the League of Nations were the first steps, supported by public enlightenment.

"You ask whether you can announce the subject of the address as 'Stopping the Next War Before It Begins.' That is what, in good part, I would like to talk about but, frankly, I don't like the title. Everybody will think that I am going to give them a cut-and-dried plan. But I have none such. With all due deference to your views—and I know the tremendous interest you take in the matter—I think that the great trouble now is that the people of all the world have settled down to wait till someone evolves a plan in all its details which will appeal to all and all will accept. They may all agree on this or that detail but as to the entirety of each plan they disagree. It does not occur to them to begin with the things on which they may agree, with the reasonable assurance that, if they keep the chick alive, its down will develop into feathers, but they wait for the next plan which they hope will be perfect only to have their hope again disappointed." ²

When he had such good times as his bald head and the gray hair of Father J. C. Christopher—the Latin scholar of the Catholic University, which was near the Soldiers' Home—bent over a text together, it did not seem worth while to expose himself to being misunderstood by both pacifists and militarists. It was better to stick to problems which gave him real mental relaxation. One of these was so urgent that he wrote Father Christopher a letter about it without waiting for their next study hour:

"I have been reading the copy, which you loaned me a few days ago, of Cicero's *De Amicitia* edited by Professor Reid. I want to ask your opinion

¹ Letter to Colonel Archibald Hopkins, December 11, 1922.

² Letter to Edward W. Bok, October 2, 1923.

which you can, if you please, give me the next time I see you, about his construction of one passage. It occurs in Chapter XXII, par. 83, and is as follows:

Virtutum amicitia adiutrix a natura data est, non vitiorum comes, ut, quoniam solitaria non posset virtus ad ea quae summa sunt pervenire, coniuncta et consociata cum altera perveniret.

"In his note on the word *altera* Professor Reid says *altera* here = *alterius hominis virtute*.

"May there not be another interpretation?

"At the opening of the sentence Cicero says (that is, Laelius is assumed to say it), *virtutum amicitia adiutrix . . . est*. Therefore, *virtus* could not, if *solitaria*, arrive *ad ea quae summa sunt*. *Virtus* can arrive at *ea quae summa sunt* only when *coniuncta et consociata cum* something else. What is this something else? Cicero (Laelius) says *cum altera*. Does not *altera* mean 'the other one of the two things' that he has been talking about, i. e., *virtus* and *amicitia*? In that case, *cum altera* = *cum amicitia* (and not, as Professor Reid says, *alterius hominis virtute*).

"To paraphrase = a real and true friendship is a relationship established by nature between two or more persons, in order to be an effective aid in enabling each of them to attain the highest development of virtue. Our virtue, by itself alone, cannot raise us to the point where we can take the highest moral view of things (*ad ea quae summa sunt pervenire*). It can only do this when closely associated with the *adiutrix a natura data*, i. e., with *amicitia*."

And then, also to Father Christopher, "The other day when we were reading about the wars of the old Romans, you turned our conversation to the much discussed question of the practicability of limiting modern armaments and whether such limitation would put any check on world wars." This led to a long letter on the whole subject as between two friends who knew the Romans.

Bliss wrote to Colonel Wallace, of his Versailles staff, that he found the old classics so enjoyable and life so quiet and peaceful he had "quit bothering myself about this wobbly old world and am going to let it wobble as it will. It is more amusing and less irritating to read of the squabbles in the Roman Senate than it is of those of Walsh and Johnson in our own." He remarked to Wallace that Lloyd George had asked him for his papers about the Supreme Command and he had told Lloyd George he might have them but they would do him no good.

He wrote to Colonel Embick, of his Versailles staff, that he had been asked to become a member of the Williamstown Institute of

Politics. He doubted if he could spare the time for this. Some one else could better be chosen. "There are other things I would rather do in whatever time is left me than trying to regulate the zigzag spirit of this very wobbly old world—which is largely the object of the Institute of Politics." But he did not miss the opportunity, with a stenographer at his elbow, to blow off steam to Embick, and he was off with further ideas about this wobbly old world:

"The old Latin poet tells us that many a man plants a tree who will not live to enjoy its fruit. He should not have said 'many a man,' because the fact that they cannot enjoy the fruit *prevents* 'many a man' from planting any tree at all. It is very wrong, to be sure, but it is human nature. I console myself with the thought that younger men will be spurred on by hope of seeing results, a hope which older men cannot have.

"We often ask, 'will experience never teach us anything?' Experience does teach the individual and, if he has sense, he profits by it. But, no matter how much sense the individual has, the *crowd* learns nothing until its experience is overwhelmingly disastrous. The old czars and kings and emperors of 1914 learned something by the end of 1918. Could they have remained in power they might have modified their future conduct to the advantage of the world. But we have fired them out and put the mob in their places, and evidently the mob will have to learn its own lesson anew, and it will be slower in doing it. Even the disaster of the war—disaster none the less because she believes it was a victory—was not enough to teach France and now it begins to look as though a lesson may be coming more ruinous than the former one. As for us, if there was one lesson we ought to have learned from the war, it was that we either should not stick our nose into European affairs or, if we do, to keep it in. We say they don't concern us but we are forever pottering with them and never know when we will get tied hand and foot."

This brought him to the subject of the Dawes Commission which was then in Europe. It was the impression that the Commission would recommend a big loan as necessary to put Germany on her feet. We would be asked to finance the loan. He thought that this would be bad business, a risky investment (as some of the bondholders could testify later) owing to the attitude of the French and for other reasons. No account appeared to be taken of "German psychology or universal human psychology" under the burden of the enormous indemnity.

"For ages the victor has imposed upon the vanquished an infinite variety of terms. They have killed all the inhabitants and taken the territory for their own; or they have taken so much of it as they have wanted; or they have taken all the evidences of wealth that can be moved; or they have taken all the territory, all the wealth, and have made the inhabitants slaves; or, they have held part of the enemy territory with the declaration that they will get out only after the enemy have by one or two or three years—some relatively short time—earned enough spare cash to buy them off. They have done other things, but the foregoing includes about the worst. Experience has proved that these things can be done if sufficient force is available. A nation will work hard, under compulsion, as France did after 1871, for two or three years to raise the money necessary to bribe an enemy to get out of occupied territory. But, for how long will they do it? For the first time in history we have the proposition to leave a nation to work, as freemen work, but to give the surplus products of its labor for a generation or more to some one else. I doubt if it can be done.

"The German workman will stand low wages when he feels that his surplus will pay off a debt in a year or two; will he stand it for a life time? If he does, he is working as a slave, not a freeman. History shows that such men will voluntarily work as slaves for a little while, but not for long."¹

His preference for the more remote squabbles of the Roman to the present United States Senate did not prevent him from reading his daily newspaper thoroughly and keeping up his interest in American history. He disliked political quibbles, ancient or modern.

"I received the copy of the Proceedings, LVII, of the Mass. Hist. Soc. with your article on 'Why Jefferson abandoned the Presidential Speech to Congress,' which you so kindly sent me.

"I have read the article with the greatest interest. I suppose I am not unlike most Americans in not knowing, before I read your study, the pros and cons of this matter. And after reading it to the end I agree—as I think most Americans will now agree—in the negative answer which John Adams plainly implied to his own question, 'Is the difference between a speech and a message of much importance?'

"After all it was the Congress which made its own trouble. They set up a man of straw and then wasted their time in pulling it to pieces. The President performed his constitutional obligation in making known to them his views on the state of the Union; if they didn't want to do so, they didn't have to reply with an address to the Republican throne. All

¹ Letter to Colonel Stanley D. Embick, March 9, 1924.

they had to do was to get busy under their own obligation and either enact into law or reject after consideration his recommendations.”¹

He foresaw it would be a lot of work to prepare that address for the Institute of Politics. He would have to draft and revise it to his satisfaction before such an audience instead of blowing off steam to an associate or friend. Why do this in summer when he might be playing with Betty, Goring's daughter, his new little granddaughter? But he had agreed to make the Williamstown address and also to make the Commencement Day address at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. Young people would be listening to him at the Carnegie. There was some hope in them, if not for the old fellows who were so set in their ways. So he must be worthy of his audience.

“The custom is as old, I suppose, as the first school established for the training of youth, old in the days when ancient pedagogues gathered their scholars about them in the shade of the Portico or walked with them through the grove of Academus—this custom of age preaching the lessons of its experience to youth which, like the young hound eager for its first chase, is straining at the leash just ready to be slipped. Now the facts of experience may be plain enough; but its lessons are often very profound, very recondite, much more difficult of appreciation by the age which has experienced the facts than by the youth which follows. The vision of age, mental as well as otherwise, is dimmed. Older and perhaps altogether false images cling to its dulled mental retina; and they cannot be altogether thrown off so as to prevent distortion and even falsification of newer impressions.

“And so it is not so much the function of age to preach the lessons of its experience to youth. It is rather the function of youth itself, with its quicker apprehension, to learn and teach the true lessons which age has not yet learned from the facts of its experience. That is your function as it has been that of youth, more or less well or ill performed, from the beginning of time. And fortunate will the world be when the time comes that it is only one generation behind in learning the true lessons of its experience.”²

Then he proceeded with his favorite thesis of the progress of civilization from private war to domestic peace in states. Just as the value of mutual interest had ended private war the mutual interest

¹ Letter to Charles Warren, April 18, 1924.

² Address at Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, June 14, 1924.

of states and men should, in turn, end wars between nations. The Williamstown address followed the same reasoning.

"In the slowly organizing state, the individual found that his isolation was lost and that he must seek safety in some other way. He found that the only alternative to isolation is association. He also learned that association was ineffective without coöperation and that this required the assumption of certain duties and obligations, each toward the other. These duties and obligations made necessary the surrender by mutual concessions of primeval rights. This mutual concession of primitive rights was the origin of law and all civilization. . . .

"His advance began as soon as he reasoned on the fact that he was not the only self in the community; that what was good for him might in the long run prove the best only when he admitted his fellows to a share in it. That kind of selfishness guided by reason is altruism in practice. It is on that kind of selfishness of man that our hope for the future is based—selfishness guided by common-sense business principles. That will make him see that the gain of nations, as well as of individuals, is in proportion to the like gain by all others; and that this, with nations as individuals, depends upon the control of instinct by reason."¹

He regretted that we threw the decisions between war and peace and the international policies that led up to these decisions "into the maelstrom of party politics. Men selected to decide important domestic questions must decide also important international ones as a side issue. They are in a dilemma between the conviction of their own reason on one hand and the unmeaning but influential party slogans on the other. Then we find how truly Lowell said in one of his essays, 'In politics a dilemma is a more unmanageable thing to hold by the horns than a wolf by the tail.'" Bliss continued:

"In the life within a state the vast majority of its people, who obey the law and therefore incur no penalties, find that they have a great reward, a material one in dollars and cents that they can almost take note of in their statements of profit and loss, due to the simple fact of their obeying the law. It took them some ages to learn that, and their law grew gradually as they gradually learned that. And it has now become the sole reason why the vast majority of individuals, without any appeal to the ultimate physical force which waits behind the law, obey it. In international law the most difficult sanction is the imposition of penalties. Yet few men discuss any definite form of international association without

¹ Address to the Institute of Politics, Williamstown, 1924.

maintaining, at some point, that its successful operation depends on the sanction of penalties. My own opinion is that it is an error to base any initial organization on that assumption. An association of states, very possibly the present one, will become successful in proportion as its individuals learn by experience that by making a trifling mutual concession today, another one tomorrow, they are preserving longer and longer a new relation that is profitable for them; then they will find that they have a remuneratory sanction to their law."

Through his friend, John A. Kingsbury, he had become President of a society devoted to good relations between the United States and Yugoslavia. His interest in Yugoslavia may have been quickened by his sense of injustice done to her by the Italian action on the Dalmatian coast. As the society's President he was bound to give it his watchful oversight. Evidently some remarks at the inaugural meeting and some letters he received from angry Italians about Yugoslavian savagery touched the metal of the soldier, for the soldier knows by experience that war brings out excesses in brutality on both sides. He reasons that if you would avoid such excesses, keep out of war. Mutual recriminations after a war in bringing up examples, of which there is always a sufficiency, is no aid to peace in the future. Bliss wrote:

"I have never been blind to the fact that in the course of such a war as the one recently waged in Europe, murders and massacres committed by the people of one nation upon another are inevitably returned and perhaps with interest. Therefore, charges of that kind are very apt to bring counter charges supported by equal evidence. For example, in the post-war experiences in Smyrna and Anatolia our people believed at first that all of the iniquities that happened there were perpetrated by the Turks. We now know that those committed by the Greeks were if anything more indefensible than those committed against them."¹

He had formed new relations while preserving the old. Among them was one with Professor Archibald Cary Coolidge, and with Hamilton Fish Armstrong who succeeded Coolidge after his death as editor of the new magazine *Foreign Affairs*, which was sponsored by the new Council on Foreign Relations. Bliss not only contributed articles to *Foreign Affairs* but became one of the members of its editorial board. Another member was Dr. Isaiah Bowman, the

¹ Letter to John A. Kingsbury, February 1, 1924.

veteran geographer, whom Bliss had met at the Peace Conference where he had also met Dr. James T. Shotwell, Professor of History at Columbia and David Hunter Miller, an expert in international law.

Shotwell and Bliss happened to be walking down the Champs Elysées one evening when Bliss, as they passed rows of captured German guns, spoke of the misery that had been paid for these symbols of triumph. This was the beginning of an understanding friendship which is revealed in the numerous letters exchanged between the two. Shotwell belonged to no pacifist group; he was a scholar with a practical turn of mind, an inquirer who recognized in Bliss an expert on the subject of peace and war.

Later Shotwell became director of the division of economics and history of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. In the winter of 1923-24 he and Miller and a group of Americans worked out a draft of a Treaty of Disarmament and Security which became known as the American plan. It would assign, as Shotwell said, "not the responsibility for a war but the responsibility of a nation for going to war." Its first article stated: "The High Contracting Parties solemnly declare that aggressive war is an international crime. They severally undertake not to agree to its commission." The Second Article made a state which engaged in war except for purposes of defense guilty of this crime. Judgment as to guilt rested with the International Court of Justice.

Bliss sat up late at night bringing all his knowledge and experience to bear in his study of the draft and in making emendations and suggestions. He wrote to Shotwell July 7, 1924:

"It is important that the attention of the world should be forced up against some concrete statement of opinion at stated intervals. I don't believe that there is any other way to 'smoke out' nations that forever 'hang back in the collar' and do nothing. And for that very reason, I suppose it is chimerical to hope that the League will order any such reports. But it is now five years that the League has been in operation and we don't know yet what its views—beyond vague wishes and hopes—are. It is waiting to find something it can agree upon. It will make a tremendous gain if it will come out once a year with the statement that it *cannot agree on anything* and give the reasons for it. There would be national reactions everywhere that would help it in its study for the following year. It may have what it thinks are most excellent reasons for there being no reductions in armaments during the year ending Septem-

ber 1st, next; and it may have similar reasons for the same anticipated conclusion for the following year. Why not tell the world these reasons? It might be found that the mass of the people in even the most hide-bound nations do not think the reasons as 'excellent' as the League does."

In the late summer of 1924 we find him writing to his little granddaughter Betty, "This is a line from your grandpapa who is now on a big ship going to meet the sun which wakes you every morning." He was on his way with Shotwell, Miller and Joseph P. Chamberlain to the meeting of the Fifth Assembly of the League of Nations to present the American plan.

In answer to the old question which was put to him at Geneva as to whether America herself would disarm and accept the plan, he replied that we were already relatively disarmed as far as our army was concerned and we had entered into an agreement for naval reductions. America offered a plan because Europe needed it and because we did not wish to send an army to Europe again to end a future European war.

Assured that the plan would have serious consideration, the American group returned home. It became the basis for the Geneva Protocol and gave impetus to the movement for the outlawry of war, the Briand-Kellogg pact and the Pact of Paris. After his return Bliss wrote this about what he considered to be the essence of the American plan:

"We said, 'Let us take the nations at their word and treat the case as we would under domestic law. The commission of a crime must be prevented if possible.' Two men have a quarrel. One may be entirely right, on the merits of the case; the other entirely wrong. If they want *justice*, they can settle the case in any of the ways that man has always had at his disposition. They can talk it out between themselves; they can call in friends to mediate; they can arbitrate; if the law provides for it either can have the other before a court for judgment; they may even combine in a friendly suit in order to get the court's decision or opinion—or they may continue their quarrel indefinitely provided they don't make public nuisances of themselves and so become liable to the *law without any reference to the merits of their dispute*. Thus far the law and the courts look on with perfect indifference.

"But if one of them—perhaps the one who is right on the merits of the case—pulls a gun on the other, then the law steps in and says, 'that is wrong and must be stopped. It is not now a question of justice. If you

want justice you know perfectly well how to get it. It is solely a question of procedure in obtaining justice. You may be perfectly right in your dispute but your procedure is perfectly wrong.' The law stops the violence but lets the disputants continue to quarrel as long as they please provided they don't obviously interfere with the property and rights of others." ¹

He envisaged the difficulties about the yardstick in future arms conferences when he wrote to Professor Coolidge in reply to a request for an article for *Foreign Affairs*, "I think we should discard any idea that we can get a mathematical formula to determine the military strength of each nation." He continued:

"The very first thing—and I am saying things as old as the hills—toward disarmament is the gradual substitution of something in place of it. There are only three ways of settling disputes, other than the one of letting them die, if they will, of inanition—judicial procedure of some sort, arbitration of some sort, or war. Excessive armaments (the ones that we want to reduce) presuppose war. They will reduce themselves in some proportion as nations find they get their rights by the other methods. But they must agree, either formally or by tacit acceptance and practice, to resort to those methods. When enough of them begin to do this you will find them ready to discuss the beginning of disarmament. And it will be only a beginning. Any proposal to accomplish the whole result at once will be met by a universal 'no.' And that is just what is happening now. Enough have accepted the World Court and are getting still more tied up to it by the pacts of Locarno as to make them ready to confer as to the possibility of some reduction in military preparation."

Then he wondered why he should be rambling on about this "slipperiest of all slippery problems until you are more tired than you already are. How do you want it approached in a way that your readers will think worth while? It is gravely important; that goes without saying. So is life and death and the future life and all sorts of things that we can write a book about without the reader knowing more than he did before." ² However, he wrote the article. It might help a little.

A few weeks later he wrote in answer to a letter:

"You ask 'Is the abolition of war possible?' I do not know. In all that I have ever said on the subject I have always spoken of the 'minimization

¹ Letter to Manley O. Hudson, December 2, 1924.

² Letter to Archibald Cary Coolidge, January 2, 1925.

of the chances of war' and not of the abolition of it. The world must begin to minimize it before we can talk about abolishing it. The abolition of it, if it ever comes, will be without the world's knowing just how it came about. What the checks of a growing public opinion will put on States I do not know. But I can hardly conceive of other than two—arbitration in cases where no international law applies, and a World Court where international law does apply.”¹

At a dinner of the Council on Foreign Relations he said:

“I cherish no illusions on the subject of war. I have long believed that it is, essentially, a great evil. But, as the history of the world has been, it has not been the greatest nor the worst. That state of slavish and sluggish indifference on the part of a people that makes it think there is nothing worth a war is a far greater and worse evil. War has destroyed civilizations, religions, political institutions; but it has also won and preserved them. And, as for myself, I thank the good God who has given us bodies and souls strong and enduring enough to win and hold them by war, so long as it can be done in no other way. The whole question lies in that. Has the time come, or is it near at hand, when great international wars must of necessity destroy more than they save? If so, then every such war means a step backwards toward the extinction of what we want to save.

“You will have noted that the one sole underlying cause of the disturbed conditions is mutual fear. That condition is exactly what yours and mine would be were we to revert to the ancient status of private war. We would arm against each other and then find that no amount of armament can dispel the fear, because those that can arm the least are still at the mercy of those that can arm the more and the latter are in even more fear of each other. There comes a time when that haunting fear causes the victor to do his enemy to the death. And that is likely to happen in the war of nations.”

Although he became discouraged at times about the League he still believed in its value. It did mean that the nations had a public forum and a permanent organization as an international clearing house to promote amity.

“The thing that most impresses me here in Washington is the undoubted (in my mind) fact that if the League were dissolved and dead tonight, tomorrow morning the men who have been hoping for that outcome and working for it would be on their feet in the House and Senate with resolutions for the creation of a new one. And they would probably quarrel a long time before doing anything. Even then, they would find that one or another of other nations, without which it could not be very

¹ Letter to Charles Flenniken, March 20, 1925.

successful, would hold aloof. And when they realized that, you would find a very different sentiment in the United States about nations that do thus hold aloof. . . .

"I fancy that somewhere, in some nook of the 'Elysian Fields and at the ends of the Earth' whither the immortals have conveyed them, in the asphodel meadows under the shade of the trees by the river whose draughts bring forgetfulness of all that we ought to forget, Wilson and Lodge may be discussing the Covenant in a new spirit, in the calm of the gods, and finding far more things in it to agree about than for difference. Wise old Homer knew that without his river Lethe, bringing forgetfulness of what we ought to forget, his Elysian fields would be only another hell, so he put it there instead of here. But I wish there were a little tributary brooklet of it flowing where the Potomac does." ¹

He did not believe that the prospect of war's horrors would restrain peoples from going to war. Nor did he believe that the killing power of modern long range weapons would make war impossible. This had been the central idea of Bloch's book just before the Russo-Japanese War, where soldier met soldier in personal encounter with the bayonet as they did in the World War. In the future as in the past armies would bear about the same amount of deaths and casualties before they yielded. The total losses had been heavier in the ancient battles with sword and javelin, in which no quarter was given, than in modern battles. He did not believe modern weapons were any more cruel than the ancient.

"So long as war exists by common consent and practice, as the final resort, with all its chances, for attaining the desired result, the nations will use such means as they believe are necessary to win victory. There are some who think it wrong to temporarily choke a man with gas but that it is quite right to thrust him through with a 20-foot lance and then pull it out again, after the fashion by which, as Homer tells us, Agamemnon treated Adrastus, with his 'goodly ashen spear.' I myself do not think that either of these methods is what you could properly call nice. But I think that instead of attempting to differentiate between them in order to determine which of the two is the nicer, we would better employ our time in seeking to check the use of either by finding a way to minimize the necessity of using either." ²

Some addresses at a Harvard symposium, which were sent to Bliss, brought this comment:

¹ To Dr. James T. Shotwell, March 16, 1925.

² Letter to General Amos Fries, Chief of Chemical Warfare Section, January 19, 1925.

"The first one of them lays stress on the horrors of future war due to the increased power of agencies of destruction. A Harvard symposium in the Stone Age, after some cave man had devised the first stone axe in substitution for the more primeval club, would have developed the same line of discussion. If there was such a cave man's symposium, it did just as much good as the Harvard one will. Possibly Mrs. Cave Man, as she listened, felt a delicious little shudder run up and down her naked spine while Mr. Cave Man was thinking how he could make a bigger and sharper axe. At the Conference of Paris in 1856 an effort was made to 'outlaw' the use of explosive shells in field artillery on the ground that such use merely increased the savagery and bitterness of armed conflicts and tended, therefore, to prolong a war. The Conference refused on the ground that experience had shown that the side which used these shells had an appreciably greater chance to win, and if one side used them both must.

"And before this time it was decided to make illegal the use of chain-shot in naval war on the ground that experience had shown that their effect on victory was inappreciable and, therefore, the resultant suffering was not profitable. This is the result of war as long as men have fought or will fight. What they believe 'pays' in securing victory they will use as they will in any other business they choose to engage in.

"If I believed that emphasis on the horrors of war would appreciably prevent it, I would emphasize it as much as anyone *solely* for the purpose of substituting something that will in the long run gain our purpose better than war is likely to do. Until we can agree to make a beginning of trying to substitute that 'something better,' there will always be a rich field left for the propagandist. . . . He works on a diseased national and international mentality. Many of us as individuals have that mentality. Under the ordinary circumstances of daily life we are rational, sane, and would look with repugnance on some suggested course of action.

"But our minds are as unbalanced as a ship at sea without ballast. Along comes a wave set in motion by an unknown distant storm or an unperceived subterranean force and then over we go. When our unbalanced mentality goes upside down, everything that was wrong becomes right and *vice versa*. *Fas versum atque nefas*. We play on our emotions in time of peace and get one reaction as to right; in war along comes the propagandist and plays on the same emotions and gets the same reaction in the reverse direction. In this case action and reaction are equal though not simultaneous.

"My own idea as to curing this diseased mentality is to recognize that, just as in a thousand conditions of the human body, it is the result of habit. A man needs, he thinks, a tonic; he thinks whiskey is a good tonic; he takes it and will continue to take it (if he can get it!) until you show him something better. Even then the change is not a process of instantaneous substitution but a slow process of curing a bad habit. At any rate, unless you give him something he believes better he will stick to his

whiskey even, perhaps, if it kills him.

"Men have fought in war until they have acquired a habit of mind toward it. Many of their wars have paid and many have not:—paid for some in the preservation of civil and religious liberty and of all human rights, have not paid for others because they have lost all these—but win or lose they will put up the price, even to the loss of all, so long as there is no other accepted way of securing even the chance of getting what they believe is their right.

"So, if I emphasized the horrors of war it would be solely for the purpose of showing (1) the huge price and (2) that even for the price we no longer have the gambler's chance of getting what we want and may have a right to get; therefore, the method does not pay. This is not the moralist's point of view. I would rather appeal solely to the moral sense of men if I thought that was the quickest way to secure my aim.

"But, after all, what difference does it make in ultimate attainment? Good morals and good business are interchangeable terms. How few Christian moralists there are in the world after all these two thousand weary years and after the inconceivably dread sacrifice of an incarnate God which should long since have filled the world with such moralists. Now it is a question of using the 'wisdom of serpents.' All moralists are more likely to unite with business men in the latter's view than all business men to take the moral view. In this view, for the first time in history, moralists and business men and *honest* militarists are taking the same view. For even the honest militarist—and I know plenty of them—believes rightly or wrongly that until there is some other accepted way to replace war we must be ready for war.

"And so I reduce every argument against war to the terms of the business argument and use that, and I console myself with the belief that in dealing with the question as a business one I am actuated by moral convictions. Like an honest business man I don't want to cheat. Therefore, I won't sell the 'war theory' to my customers at a high price when I can offer them a cheaper and better thing."¹

Some seekers after truth, who heard Bliss explore all sides of a subject and might have decided that he had come to no definite conclusion, would have understood that he did in the matter of personal duty, if they had read the following letter:

"I am glad that President Butler of Columbia thinks that I could do something worth while. I have more confidence in my willingness than my capability. You say that he desires to bring the matter before his executive committee in October. The former one knows all about; the latter he knows nothing about until he tries. So all I can say is that I am willing

¹ Letter to Reverend John A. Ryan, D.D., November 10, 1925.

and eager to try so long as Dr. Butler and yourself think my trying is worth while." ¹

The executive committee approved Keppel's plan that Bliss should make a tour from college to college to talk to their international relations clubs in the winter of 1925-26. He decided that what he called the interviews with the clubs should be entirely informal in a quite different line "from what would be taken in addressing a general audience. I am not going as a propagandist, but solely to do what I can to stimulate interest in international relations." ² Keppel also had other work for him in mind in connection with Shotwell. Bliss wrote that the general line of work on which Shotwell had been engaged "appeals to me more than any other. I would devote to it whatever is left of my working life. I am one of those who believe that a great constructive work is waiting and is ready for gradual accomplishment, not to guarantee but to promote international peace." ³

In that tour of the colleges soldier Bliss, bearing a lance for peace, had a definite detail. The sixth four-star general in our history would not be meeting four-star and three-star scholars and sages but the young lieutenants and privates of learning. With undaunted courage, at seventy-three, he set forth with his Thucydides and a list of railroad connections in his brief case. It was to be day after day through December and February. Here are some examples of the schedule:

"From Alliance, Ohio, 10.50 A. M. to Youngstown at 1.09 P. M. (club at Meadville that evening); from Meadville, 10.10 A. M. to Cleveland at 4.00 P. M. (club at Painesville)."

Then to switch to the south in February:

"Enid at 9.10 P. M. (Philips University in the morning). Leave Enid at 11.55 A. M., arrive Guthrie at 3.35 P. M., leave Guthrie at 4.50 P. M. (Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in the evening)."

It was a schedule which might have broken the most toughened of popular lecturers, trained politicians, famous explorers, or big-game

¹ Letter to Frederick P. Keppel, September 9, 1925.

² Letter to Miss Eleanor M. Wolfe, November 21, 1925.

³ Letter to Frederick P. Keppel, October 5, 1925.

hunters who became the local lions of steam-heated American hospitality.

Young people always liked Bliss. He was young with them. It was only colonels, brigadiers and major generals, and one and two star scholars who stood in awe of him when he appeared gruff. So he had a real success with the clubs. He said that all the professors and students were so nice in their expressions of appreciation that it was most natural for him to think it was due to kindness of heart.

At Chambersburg (Wilson College) I found a club of eighteen very intelligent and interesting young women. The meeting of the club when I spoke was an 'open' one, that is to say pretty much everyone at the college was present. After my talk I suggested that the members of the club, as well as the others, ask questions and express their own views—in regard to anything connected with the subject of international relations. But, just as I expected, there was a certain amount of diffidence due to their being in a general assembly. However, this all disappeared in the reception which the members of the club gave me immediately afterwards in the parlors of the college and at which the non-members were also present. A cup of tea and some light refreshment seemed to open the mouths of all of them. Then they put me through a rapid-fire of very intelligent questions. When I asked questions myself they had no hesitation in expressing their own opinions. I think they would have kept it up all night and we broke up only when I told them that it was time everybody went to bed. The next morning there was another talk in the chapel which, I am afraid, lasted half an hour rather than fifteen minutes. . . .

"At Wilson College there were some four hundred young women students and at the Pennsylvania College for Women a little over three hundred. At the latter college the Dean introduced me in a nice little speech, in which he mentioned my true name two or three times; and concluded by formally presenting me as 'General Dawes.' This at once had the pleasing effect of breaking up any feeling of formality that might otherwise have marked the subsequent proceedings. After my address there was again an informal reception and a long talk which I think was more profitable than any address could be. It lasted until pretty nearly midnight, they and myself asking questions."¹

His lips must have twitched with that familiar half-smile when he was taken for General Dawes. Doubtless he made his talks clear. Wasn't Thucydides always clear? But one questions whether Thucydides himself or Xenophon or Leonidas could have gone

¹ Letter to Henry S. Haskell, December 3, 1925.

through that itinerary. Bliss' bodily strength had to yield, and he was most contrite to have broken his engagements.

As usual, he had a few modest suggestions to make as the result of his observations. One was to apply a sort of "case system" in the club meetings. Different members, after studying the situations, attitudes, character, fears and ambitions of the different nations, should take the parts of prime ministers and foreign ministers, and thus they would think in practical terms of international relations through simulated experience in counsel and negotiations.

He said that he would try to fill the later engagements, but the physical fortitude to face them did not come, although the spirit still burned brightly, and he not only read and studied late at night, but he could rise from his bed to take up his pencil and pad when an idea captivated him.

"It is getting on to the 'wee, sma' hours,' and I was just about to lay the book on the other pillow and turn over to sleep when my eye fell on a passage that I must bring to your notice. When you want a classical quotation you will find more than one in it that will emphasize points on the subject that you and I often talk about. So I have gotten up to make this memo to send to you tomorrow.

"You will see what I mean if you look up the last sentence of Chapter LXV of the third book of Livy. At first, not being very much awake, I noticed only the clause '*cavendoque ne metuant, homines metuendos ultro se efficiunt.*' Then I saw the whole sentence bristled with phrases that hit the eye.

"So difficult is it for men to impose self-restraint on themselves in the measures they take for defending their liberties. Each one, while pretending that he only wants equality of rights, nevertheless in raising himself presses the other down. In taking such measures as will relieve themselves of fear, men in reality make themselves objects of fear to others (that is the clause beginning *cavendoque*, etc.). We inflict upon our neighbors the injury from which we protect ourselves—just as if it were absolutely necessary to be always either doing or suffering wrong.

"In Livy that is all in one sentence. He has been talking of the excesses of the patricians on the one hand and of the tribunes of the plebs on the other. He winds up his account with the above reflections. But it exactly fits the case of modern states when first one and then another begins the process inevitably leading to excessive armaments.

"Think of that old fellow sitting in the Rome of the first Cæsar, at the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire, with such sights and sounds all about him as Juvenal described a little later, and thinking and writing such things! But after all, when I think further about it, if

I omit consideration of the steam engine, telegraphy, telephony, radio and such-like things, there is scarcely any subject of thought that those same old fellows didn't pretty thoroughly exhaust. About those things it is hard for us to be original. We can only take their ideas and express them in a different way. And that reminds me to say that I was delighted to see Dr. Butler's defense of the classics. Now till morning!"¹

¹ Letter to Dr. James T. Shotwell, December 14, 1926.

XXXIX

SUNSET

His second term as Governor of the Soldiers Home drew to a close. He and Mrs. Bliss must now really decide where they were to spend the remainder of their days. Should it be in the old house in Rosemont, with its associations of their youthful days, where their thousands of books were stacked?

Many arguments appeared for and against Washington, which he had once said he disliked. Their son, Colonel Edward Goring Bliss, who had resigned from the army, had become manager of the Chesapeake and Ohio Telephone Company in Washington. There they would be near him and their granddaughter Betty, near many old friends, near the heart of national affairs and the Congressional Library, the professors with whom he read Latin and Greek. But their daughter Eleanor, Dr. Eleanor, geologist, wife of Dr. Adolph Knopf, professor of geology at Yale, lived at New Haven, which was farther from Washington than from Rosemont. However, Eleanor frequently had to come to Washington in connection with her work on the Geological Survey. She is her father's own daughter in mind and character, to whom the author makes acknowledgment for much material and aid in which her affection for him included impartial understanding of all his qualities.

He would always have a good reason for another visit to Eleanor when he went to New York for a meeting of the editorial board of *Foreign Affairs* and various other meetings and errands in his work for more amity among peoples.

At New Haven he really had a second home. There, too, he could preside at the chafing dish to make an oyster stew, and Eleanor would find in some shop the garlic for the faint touch in the mixing of a salad, which he made an affair requiring no less care than the problems of the Supreme War Council, on his general principle that anything worth doing at all was worth doing well. For the lobster stews he went down to the beach and picked out the ones he wanted in the course of a talk with the lobsterman on the subject of lobsters.

which had their own peculiar lives to live no less than oysters.

He also met the Latin and Greek professors at Yale. It was while looking at an old papyrus that he remarked to Professor Austin M. Harmon that one of the words of the Greek title to it did not seem to be right to him. Professor Harmon agreed that this was so and would have it corrected.

And at New Haven was granddaughter Theresa who had a vital spark that was reflected in his own eyes. When he unpacked his dress suit case she always looked to see if there were a classic and a detective story. If so, all was well; the routine of grandfather's travel had not been broken. She took him to the movies; and once, when the family was absent and he was not in the best of health, they returned to find that she had taken him to a football game in a chilling rain. He smiled at Tess and she smiled at him in the understanding appreciation of fellow conspirators who had played hookey and of the evidence that he had not caught cold. He liked football games and movies when he saw them with Tess.

Accepting the fact that the Blisses in their old age could not have both son and daughter next door, but that Eleanor was always accessible, there was another argument in favor of Washington which had great weight in the final decision in its favor. The manifold activities of Baker, who was practicing law in Cleveland, often brought him to Washington, when he always found time for a chat with Bliss, in which they turned the world upside down with loving though chiding hands and took it apart in order to see why its inhabitants, who had so much in general to recommend them, should act so perversely at times against their own common interests. Here was a really remarkable friendship which deepened and broadened and mellowed and glowed the more brightly with the passing of the years.

Bliss' letters mention that he had a problem in reorganizing the finances of the Home as well as in looking after improvements, and they mention the weeks of alarm when Mrs. Bliss had double pneumonia and how, after her slow convalescence, Eleanor had been ill and how he himself had had the first spell of illness of any length in his career. At the same time events were not going well in the world at large. Memory of the war and its lessons were dimmed as

the era of prosperity rose on what many accepted as an ever ascending scale. We had become indifferent to the League of Nations; Senate views were averse to the World Court, the while feeling on both sides of the Atlantic became more set about the war debts. In this light we may read further excerpts from his letters:

"Can you educate the common people of Europe to the belief that it is a debt which they ought to pay? I am sure not; they have made themselves believe that there is, in reality, no debt to be either paid or condoned; that the money we put into the war is no more a subject of repayment or of condonation than is the money value of our lives lost and bodies maimed; that lives and property and money were contributions to a common pool for the purchase of victory; that we no longer have any claim to the money, because we have the victory which it bought. Can you educate the mass of the people of the United States to accept that belief? I think it is becoming increasingly manifest that you cannot. . . .

"Our people were led to believe, as was the case with the masses of European peoples, that Germany was the sole cause of a system that saddled them with the burdens of war in peace and at the same time, instead of preventing war, made its coming all the more certain and terrible; and that, with Germany out of the way, the burdens and dangers would be removed. When I was in France in 1917-18 that was the one argument used by governments to keep their peoples willing to endure the tremendous strain. So it was in the United States after April of 1917. The people believed that with their blood and money they were buying something that was worth it. Now they are disillusioned. It may have been an illusion to think that they ever could buy what they expected to get. Nevertheless, the nations who borrowed our blood and money—the first of which they can't repay and the latter of which they don't want to repay—deluded our people as they did their own by the most earnest declarations as to what victory would result in. Now our people know that they have not received what they paid for; that the burden of preparing for the next war is everywhere as great as it was to prepare for the last one; and they are thinking more and more that all they can hope for is to get a part of their money back. . . .

"From the beginning I have believed that we ought to have condoned the debt. Done at the beginning, before Europe had worked itself up into its present mental attitude, it would have been an act of altruism cementing friendship; done now, it is likely to be regarded as a concession we make to necessity, as an admission that their view is right and that in the strict sense they don't owe us even gratitude. But at the beginning I hoped that such action by us might have been coupled with conditions that might have started Europe on a different course from the one it has taken. Probably this was a baseless dream, but I hoped. . . .

"I am quite ready to preach to our people forgiveness of the debt, at the same time carefully avoiding expression of my belief that its collection is hopeless; but trying to make them believe what I believe to be the fact, that we will thereby get something worth far more than ten billions of dollars. That is the reason why I think that the sentimental view is still, as it always was, the soundest business view."¹

We should continue our plan of education. The hopeful line for it to follow was to put some form of arbitration or judicial procedure on a sound basis. "No armed nations will disarm merely on the hope they may arbitrate their disputes. They must know in advance that they will arbitrate all or some. If all they have good grounds for beginning effective disarmament; and disarmament depends on the peoples' knowledge that they can count definitely or resort to peaceful methods in definite classes of cases." The hope was in keeping people thinking, in not allowing them to forget. This was the value of such organizations as the international clubs.

"You are building up thousands of organizations all over the country. In each of their communities there may now be little or no interest, outside of themselves, in the World Court. It is easy enough to fill the village public hall with an audience to listen to a discussion of prohibition, or farmers' relief legislation, etc. About as many would go to hear about the Court as to hear a technical discussion of the Einstein theory. But let a serious crisis develop. . . . In every town and village people will be asking 'Is there nothing we can do that will give us justice and at the same time avoid war?' Then these organizations which you will have maintained, of men and women interested in this subject and who have been quietly studying it, will find their village halls filled with audiences eager to hear about the Court and with minds in a receptive mood. The opportunity will have come; your organizations will be there; and they will take opportunity by the forelock."²

He did not think that the downfall of civilization could be entirely assigned to war. It was often owing to the survival of the mentally stronger:

"When a civilization perished we can perhaps trace how it was undermined by the intellectual attack of another. This undermining attack (had there been no physical attack also) would have gradually, in the processes of a longer time, either destroyed one of them and have substi-

¹ Letter to Professor Douglas W. Johnson, August 15, 1926.

² To Miss Esther Everett Lape, January 1, 1927.

tuted the other for it; or, more likely, each would have partially absorbed the civilization of the other (one of them perhaps doing this to a greater degree in proportion to its intellectual vigor in one or another respect) and the two civilizations would have continued to exist side by side, each of them benefited by the absorption of what suits it from the other. . . .

"Can the struggle be confined to the intellectual contest? If so, it will be better for all civilizations. . . . Certainly if there is any good that we would like to see transferred from one civilization to another the day of accomplishment is deferred by violence."¹

If each racial group in Europe refused to be absorbed and its neighbors refused to give and take for the purpose of common civilization, then the frontiers of nations would have to be extended over many alien groups to include all their own. This would lead to the suppression of the alien groups which would arouse animosity and bitter desire for relief by their kindred across the border and lead to further armament. We had not to wait on the present European situation to know this. It was forecast in the records of the Peace Conference, which he had now added to his accumulation of papers.

We have a glimpse of him through his letters in the spring of 1927 arranging and packing his papers for his change of residence. He had been working day and night at his task, he said. "I have now got all the important ones in a series of approximately one hundred filing cases, and as soon as I get them in my new house I shall have time to go over them more carefully and get everything so I shall know exactly where to find it."

He had been scrupulous about not retaining papers which were obviously government property, but had kept the carbons to which he was entitled for a record of his own actions should they ever be called in question; and he had kept private letters, copies of all manner of public documents which related to his service and to other matters which interested him, and notes which he had written when he had nothing else to do, just for the sake of putting his thoughts in writing.

When he referred to the approximately one hundred files (there were actually one hundred and ten) he did not give quite the impression of their immense size or mention the many bundles. Once the files were shelved in the little study of his new home, there was

¹ Letter to David Hunter Miller, January 24, 1927.

room left only for his classics and reference books. The bundles were placed on top of the shelves, behind the books, or sent upstairs. No longer having a stenographer he had to write by hand or do his own typing, which he did quite accurately, but although he kept on broadening his education he seems not to have made much progress with the touch system.

Soon after his return from France he had received generous offers for his memoirs, which publishers thought would present much new material about the war and the Peace Conference. He had declined. His son Goring tells how, when he was offered a thousand dollars for an article on some given subject, he replied that no article was worth a thousand dollars, and he did not like the subject.

In answer to the urging of his friends, who knew the size of the storehouse from which he could draw, he half promised to do his memoirs. He gave the impression that he was getting his papers in order to make a start. Possibly he knew where to turn for any paper he wanted, but those who offered to assist him, lest his story should never be told, would have found that only he knew that the papers on the particular subject were on the "upper right hand corner of the shelf," and then that they were only a part of the subject in which Bliss had been interested at the time. Mixed with them might be items on another subject. Evidently he had browsed in his papers making selections and seeking aids to his memory, and then returned them to their cases or to their bundles, if not in despair, at least in renewed comprehension of the documentary cordage of a career that held so much to tell if he were to tell anything at all.

The cramped little study in the modest mortgaged house favored procrastination. Aside from his books and his files there was room only for his desk chair, a small table and another chair; and on this same floor was the living room where he and Mrs. Bliss might sit reading comfortably. One day, when he had some money to spare, he would enclose the back veranda in glass, and then he would have plenty of room to spread out papers which now fell off the table on to the floor. Gradually he ceased to make half-promises to his friends, and only said, "There are the papers."

But he did not cease to write an occasional article when it pleased him, and to go to the meetings of the editorial board of *Foreign Affairs*. In an article on the tenth anniversary of our entry into the

war, he said that the League of Nations could "not fail to do some good. Its essential weakness is in its inability to give anything but moral effect to the world opinion which it expresses and helps to form. With the exception of this moral restraint the world still operates under the law of force." Yet he believed there was a spirit which would require a greater effort than before on the part of an ambitious nation before it resorted to war for a selfish purpose.¹

In the course of a letter he said that the Briand-Kellogg Treaty and the Pact of Paris would be "a great advance provided that they cover every subject matter of disputes, and that the method of procedure under them is understood and agreed upon." He did not think they did cover all subject matter of disputes and pointed out many examples, including the international law of the sea, which was a part of Britain's domestic policy as much as the Monroe Doctrine of ours. (Japan's occupation of Jehol was later to become an example in point.) He went on:

"Moreover, they accepted the statements in Mr. Kellogg's letter of June 23, 1928. One of these statements is that 'it (any nation) alone is competent to decide whether circumstances require recourse to war in self-defense.' 'If it has a good case, the world will applaud and not condemn its action.' What better could Germany have asked in 1914? If she had won, the world might have grumbled but it would have accepted the result. . . .

"What about the method of procedure under the Pact of Paris? Can a nation say, 'I adopt diplomacy as my peaceful means of settlement, and shall go on arguing forever, if need be'? That would be an absurdity;—yet what is there to prevent it, except war? But here comes in the strange belief of a good many recent writers, to wit, that nations will go on disputing indefinitely about a matter of vital importance, because the treaty obliges them to do so if they can't settle the matter by peaceful means. I believe the disputes *must* be settled; it is too dangerous to take the chance of indefinite continuance. In practice there would soon be an appeal from Philip *sober* to Philip *drunk*,—drunk with rapidly accumulating democratic passions.

"Therefore my insistence is—in spite of Davis, Shotwell, Wickersham, Chamberlain and Hudson,—that there is no alternative to war except law. Of course I know that in the last resort law will be ineffective in some cases without compulsion. But nations that want peace will never resort to compulsion against two quarrelsome ones that are running *amok* through the peace of the whole world until there is an efficient law to

¹ New York World, April 6, 1928.

which they can compel them to have recourse. When there is such a law they will be ready to enforce the peace. International law is not a policy."

This letter was in his own typing, which led him to say in a post-script, "No stenographic costs whatever." Then he added in his own handwriting on the back of the page:

"I don't mean at all that all disputes are to be settled by law in a World Court. I am inclined to look on international law rather as a means to *prevent* disputes than to settle those that arise. Moreover, no code of law is ever completed. New ones will be necessary. . . . But I regard a clear-cut statement of basic rights and obligations as the surest way to prevent disputes arising about them. And this is the more important now that all governments are becoming democratic and it may not be cool-headed, far-seeing statesmen, but an ignorant uncontrollable passion that will settle disputes."¹

He kept up his friendship with Shotwell, with all his friends, new and old, in heart if no longer with the written word. At times he would pace the hall in soliloquy in which he might present to imaginary senators all the reasons why we should join the World Court. His granddaughter Betty was only a few blocks away and time flew fast when he was with her. The Charles Warrens were also near by and he could say all he had in mind to them, and to the Robert Wood Blisses when they were in town. He might walk on to have a chat with General John Chamberlain, or spend an hour at the club. With Grant, Wallace and Embick in Washington he was not yet without listeners to whom he would blow off steam in good army fashion. He continued to perfect his Greek and Latin and to read the latest books of serious importance.

"My pleasures, as befits an old man, are not so much those of hope as of memory," he wrote to Judge Campbell. "And no pleasure exceeds that which I feel, as I sit here with my pipe and a book and an occasional cheerful glass, as I think of our long-time friendship and association." But he smoked a pipe only when he was working at his desk; otherwise, cigarettes.

He renewed memories with men with whom he had been associated abroad when they appeared in Washington. General W. W. Atterbury was another friend of whom he was especially fond. They

¹ To Hamilton Fish Armstrong, February 17, 1929.

had come to know each other early in the war through Bliss' interest in transportation, which gave a sympathetic ear to Colonel W. J. Wilgus, the pioneer railroad man of the A.E.F.

He had a grand time on his visit to Atterbury in Philadelphia. When Atterbury sent him Major General Sir Henry Maurice's *The Last Four Months: How the War Was Won*, he followed a not infrequent habit of penciled comments on the margins of pages. Those on Maurice's errors in the book now in Atterbury's possession left no doubt about the nature of the Supreme War Council and how Supreme Command was established. They were the clearest brief statement on the subject ever made.

We find him writing to Baker, November 29, 1929, about a tempting offer he had just received to go to China.

"My wife, of course, says Go. She thinks only of what she believes would please me, and of herself not at all. It is the way of such wives as mine. I have practically left it to my daughter to decide, for she will weigh the scales more evenly than either her mother or myself could do."

It had not occurred to him that he might not be physically fit for the journey. He had never taken much thought of his body, with its giant's constitution, on which he had drawn many heavy drafts, the heaviest when he was near or past retiring age. In less than two weeks it sounded an alarm. His doctor immediately sent him to Walter Reed Hospital where, to his surprise, he found that he was in the surgical ward, and the chief of the ward and three assistants were examining him.

"I asked no questions," he wrote to Baker, "but like Br'er Rabbit just laid low (easy enough, because I was then flattened out as low as could be) and watched."

To cut the story short, as Bliss remarked, the surgeons decided not to "carve me up" and the next day transferred him to a pleasant room in another ward for medical treatment, where he spent his seventy-seventh birthday. He was discharged, January 3, with the warning that his health was now under his own control by practicing moderation. He wrote to Baker that he was feeling like twenty. He kept up his interests without being much impeded by the admonitions; but when he learned that Baker had been ill he wrote what he introduced as a Dutch Uncle of a letter to his former chief.

"A man in his physical prime, as you were in war-time, may give a great deal—even an excessive amount of his strength—to the task in hand and recover it all; but only if he doesn't try to put all his strength all the time into it. There comes a time when he loses more than any amount of rest can make up.

"You ought to follow the philosophy of Socrates and Plato, the *fons et origo* of which was the two apothegems inscribed on the pillars at the entrance to the temple of Delphi,—'Know Thyself' and 'Nothing Too Much.' The ancients thought so much of these that they ascribed them, some to the Seven Sages of Greece, others to the titular god of the temple, the great Apollo himself.

"Only by knowing yourself can you know what is too much. The former you know well enough, no one better, few as well; but the latter you pay no attention to. Yet Plato and other ancients (I fancy St. Paul did, as well) thought so much of it that they largely built on it their philosophy of life. To them 'too much' was a vice but not more so than 'too little.' With them 'nothing too much' applied to both extremes, for they regarded 'too little' as being the same thing as 'too much littleness.' In short they regarded 'too much' as a vice, whether too much littleness or too much bigness. Between the two they saw the golden mean and for them this golden mean was what they called 'virtue,' that is to say, all manly goodness and excellence. They held that this virtue could only be attained by self-restraint from both of the extremes, and this is St. Paul's 'temperance in all things.'

"If you will agree to accept and apply to yourself that teaching I won't say anything more. I don't want to preach a sermon. That, I admit, would be an impertinence. But I do want you to know how I and all your friends feel. You can't live half a dozen lives in one. No man can."

But Bliss had been as recreant as Baker in trying to prove that a man could. However, in citing the ancients, Bliss did not offer himself as a modern example for Baker to follow. Baker wrote to Bliss most contritely promising to behave himself in the future.

It was just after this first illness the author saw Bliss the last time. He came to luncheon with me at the hotel where I was living and then to my room, and was in full flood of talk until dinner separated us, occasionally interrupting himself with, "I'm a retired, garrulous old army officer. Just throw me out when you are tired of me." His mind, in majestic sweep of anecdote and philosophy, ran the range from boyhood days through his Cuban service and that in France to the present state of the world. Only once in all that time did he utter one sentence that carried any harsh slant against a fellow human being. He simplified this by saying, "He was a liar, and I told him so."

He regretted the Foch-Clemenceau controversy; it was a pity that they should be hurling curses at each other when the doors of their tombs were soon to close upon them.

His memoirs? "There were the papers." He held the conviction that the truth of history required that he tell all; and yet that was too difficult and perhaps unkindly. At least, he knew he had not the strength for it now.

The reduction of armaments? He was still hopeful, hopeful we should enter the World Court. The propitious time for reduction was after the war when its costs were fresh in mind.

He looked back to the days of his youth and took fresh heart in the change in attitude toward war in his own life time, just one man's life time. The glory was out of it and its realities better realized by youth, who, he hoped, would be less likely to fall under the spell of war emotion. The world economic depression, which had now begun, interested him deeply in what effects it would have upon the future of peace and war. Points in his career to which he referred proudly were his work in Cuba, drafting the Cuban reciprocity treaty, his part for unified command, and that he had been able to read an old Latin sentence which had stumped some of his scholarly colleagues at Versailles.

The men whom he had known? He characterized many in clear outline as he saw them. He had had great chiefs: Schofield and then Root, for whom his respect was mixed with awe. And the one he loved above all men was Baker.

He had become thinner with age. At times I was conscious of his facial resemblance to that of the bust of Socrates. Others had noted this, but had found that mention of it was not agreeable to him. The Bliss who thought of himself as a garrulous, old, retired army officer was irritated that such disrespect should be shown for Socrates. The resemblance also appears in a bust of Bliss by Jo Davidson. This might be excellent art, but Bliss sought to buy it so he could suppress it. When he learned that the price was three thousand dollars he promptly broke off negotiations. However, he got some amusement out of the bust when one of his war-time colleagues told him that it made him look like a Chinese Bismarck.

It was only ten days after the Dutch Uncle letter that he was saying in his next letter to Baker that he was again at the Walter Reed.

He rejoiced in Baker's own convalescence and added a postscript of apology for talking so much about himself. The previous week he had gone to New York to preside at a dinner to Lord Derby at the Harvard Club and that night had been stricken with violent agony at the home of Judge Campbell.

He had been six weeks in hospital when the Congress gave him four stars in permanence; for, upon his retirement, he had reverted automatically to the two of a major general. If he had recovered so he could have worn the four again probably he would have rarely appeared in uniform at functions where his rank would have placed him in the front line. As he said to the soldier in the commissary at Brest where he bought the boots, "You are never frightened when you see a lot of stars in the heavens at home. So do not allow these stars to frighten you, my friend."¹

There were to be months of siege in hospital, with Mrs. Bliss coming every day, with Eleanor near by when she was not at his bedside. At first, on pleasant days when he seemed to be feeling better, Eleanor took him for short automobile rides. Then he became too weak to leave his bed, but still his mind remained clear. Goring Bliss relates how when Baker came to see him he would not let Baker go, and they discussed the Russian problem for two hours. He disliked thinking that granddaughter Betty should have a memory of his wasted face. Yet he could not deny himself the happiness of seeing her.

He knew that he had to die, and knew the family was concealing the truth from him, but humored them, as they became aware, in allowing them to keep their illusion.

"And for us all it is still the great mystery that it has been from the beginning of man's time," he had written to his son-in-law Dr. Knopf after the death of Dr. Knopf's mother. "And in all that time the very mystery of it has bred into the minds of many a feeling of stoicism that it is something we must all endure and cannot help. . . . The hope of our fathers remains."

When the question had been brought up six months before his final illness, as to where he would prefer to be buried, he said: "Arlington. Pershing has chosen the Cathedral. But in the event Pershing should change his mind and decide for Arlington, do not

¹ Theodore E. Syman, Sergeant of the Commissary at Brest, to the author.

put me on a slope where I should be above him. He was commander in the field."

Bliss faced death with a soldier's fatalism, a philosopher's objectiveness, and to the last he had not had to abdicate the functions of his mind. The end came on November 9th, 1930. Probably the highest tribute to him is that in ethics, character, industry and ability he had been a great, modest, faithful public servant from the day he took his oath as a cadet: and it seems likely that he himself would have regarded it as the highest.

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